

# The Meaning of the Eucharistic Sayings in the Synoptics and Pauline Writings



**Thrust statement:** The blood of Christ represents the new covenant, which was made possible by the pouring out of His blood upon Calvary.

**Scripture reading:** [Matthew 26:17-30](#); [Mark 14:12-26](#); [Luke 22:7-20](#); [1 Corinthians 11:17-34](#)

This essay, unlike the previous essay on the Passover, will describe and explore in greater detail the historical setting of the Last Supper in order to establish a greater comprehension of the Eucharistic<sup>[1]</sup> sayings in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul. An understanding of the Passover traditions in the first century should enhance one's ability to interpret the Synoptic writings as well as the Pauline Epistle of First Corinthians in which the Last Supper is portrayed. Some scholars do not believe that the Last Supper occurred during the Passover meal. But this mindset is not just limited to just several Biblical scholars. Today, some Christians also maintain that the Lord's Supper did not take place during the annual celebration of their exodus from Egypt. Yet, the evidence derived from the New Testament and outside sources confirm that the Last Supper did indeed happen during this sacred meal.<sup>[2]</sup>

When Christians fail to understand the traditions of the Passover in the first-century, this lack of perception can result in some rather bizarre interpretations of the Eucharistic sayings, chiefly among some believers associated with the one-cup and nonSunday school fellowships/churches. The positive evidence that this meal was a Passover meal is that this particular gathering occurred in the city, not in the suburbs of Jerusalem. Also, this meal transpired at night, not in the late afternoon. Another part of positive evidence is that a hymn was sung at the end of the meal, which was true of the Passover observance in the first-century. Another piece of evidence is that during the Passover in the first century, individuals reclined rather than sat around a table ([Matthew 26:20](#); [Mark 14:18](#); [Luke 22:14](#)). Additionally, the Passover lamb, the bitter herbs, and so on, also lends credence to the Passover festivity. Last, but not least, four ritualistic cups were employed during the Passover: (1) The Cup of Consecration, (2) The Cup of Proclamation, (3) The Cup of Blessing, and (4) The Cup of Hallel [praise].<sup>[3]</sup>

One of the four ritualistic cups stands out in this meal, namely, The Cup of Blessing, the cup “after supper” ([1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:25](#)). Luke also identifies this particular cup with the phrase “after supper” [μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, meta to deipnhsai] ([Luke 22:20](#)), which simply means after the meal proper. Prior to the eating of the Passover meal, two other cups were drunk—The Cup of Consecration and The Cup of Proclamation. Neither Matthew nor Mark identifies the particular cup; the phrase “after supper” is absent from their accounts. Paul is the only one of the writers who identifies the name of the cup utilized—“The Cup of Blessing.” On the other hand, Luke is the only one who mentions two of the four cups ([Luke 22:7-23](#))—second and third cups.

What does the name “The Cup of Blessing” (τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας, to pothrion eulogias)<sup>[4]</sup> signify? For the Jews, this cup symbolized their thanksgiving to God for His deliverance from Egyptian bondage, which was a blessing. Today, this third cup is the cup that signifies redemption from the kingdom of Satan and transference to God’s kingdom. In other words, this Cup of Blessing reminds each believer of God’s atonement for the redemption of humanity, namely, Jesus. Paul adds an additional saying of Jesus: “do this in remembrance of me” ([1 Corinthians 11:24, 25](#)). Of this cup, Jesus says, “**This is my blood of the covenant**” ([Matthew 26:28](#)). In other word, this third cup represented His covenant blood. This expression—“blood of the Covenant”—is confusing to many Christians. Gustaf Dalman writes: “This leads to the translation ‘This is my covenant-blood’. The interpreting words would in this case mean: ‘The wine of the cup which I offer to you, signifies to you a covenant-blood, which, moreover, will soon be contained in my blood’”.<sup>[5]</sup> This Cup of Blessing is the most appropriate cup to represent redemption from the bondage of sin. Many Christians within the one-cup and nonSunday school movement misunderstand this expression about the “blood of the Covenant”. In fact, many of these Christians identify the literal drinking vessel as representing the new covenant, not the blood. In a debate between E. H. Miller and M. L. Lemley (80 years old at the time of the written debate), Miller states:

Brother Lemley may say, “The cup” is the “blood—which ratifies the covenant.” But Jesus will differ with him; for Jesus said as just quoted, “**This cup, he said, is the new covenant ratified by my blood which is to be poured out on your behalf.**” So the cup is the covenant ratified by the blood, but is not the blood that ratified the covenant. If Lemley says, “Notice it says, ‘which is shed for you,’ or as Weymouth’s translations says, ‘which is poured out on your behalf,’ and that which ‘is shed’ or ‘poured out’ refers to ‘the cup,’ I will have to differ with him, for Jesus did not shed a cup. Alford’s Greek New Testament with English notes says, “These words can not be of TO POTERION (Greek for “the cup” E.H. M.), which is not poured out.”<sup>[6]</sup>

## THE IMPLIED READER VERSUS THE REAL READER

Since this essay seeks to unfold the context of the various Eucharistic sayings, it is necessary to call attention to the original readers and the readers of today. Many twenty-first century readers still read “the cup” or “a cup” and automatically assume that this indicates one container for the distribution (divide among yourselves—[Luke 22:17](#)) of the fruit of the vine. This is not just a phenomenon among the one-cup fellowship, but it is also widespread among many scholars. Contrary to the views of many Christians concerning the meaning of “cup” as a literal drinking vessel, this author states

emphatically that “The Cup of Blessing” did not refer to a single drinking vessel, but rather to the ritualistic cup—name given to a particular filling of their cups. In other words, there were “four formal drinkings of the cup at the Passover service.”<sup>[7]</sup> In the Passover, each participant had his or her own cup.<sup>[8]</sup> During this ceremony, the participants filled their cups four different times; each filling was referred to as “the cup.” This essay analyzes this unique expression—“The Cup of Blessing”—in light of the historical background of the Passover. The answer to this confusing problem does not lie in the use of Lexicons (Greek dictionaries), but rather in the historical background to the Passover in the first-century, which the *implied reader* understood.<sup>[9]</sup>

Since God’s revelation is given in story form to His people, this arrangement of communication enables them to arrive at a more precise identification in seeking answers to complex problems that divide many Christians. Literary criticism is one means of gaining a greater insight to the author’s meaning(s). Literary criticism, for example, controls the looseness that is frequently employed in the investigation of a solitary phrase.<sup>[10]</sup> Literary criticism recognizes that a single text or multiple texts are a part of a larger whole. Hayes and Holladay have correctly stated: “In attempting to understand a particular text, the exegete should seek to see the text within the structure of the major context as well as within the structure of the sub-units.”<sup>[11]</sup> When the reader poses questions about the literary placement of certain passages, he or she is able to arrive at certain conclusions that might otherwise be missed. Literary analysis of a text helps one to focus more closely upon the individual texts. This form of interpretation assists one in grasping more fully the intent of the author.

This philosophy of interpretation dealing with the complete text is thoroughly worked out by Mark Allen Powell in his study guide on narrative criticism.<sup>[12]</sup> He points out justly: “Literary criticism focuses on the finished form of the text.”<sup>[13]</sup> Again, Powell states the matter even more firmly, “Literary analysis does not dissect the text but discerns the connecting threads that hold it together.”<sup>[14]</sup> Dissecting the text from its context contributes often times to an improper application of the text. The goal of literary criticism is to read the text as the *implied reader*<sup>[15]</sup> read the text.

The *implied reader* may know things that are not in the text. But, on the other hand, the *real reader* frequently consults outside reading in order to understand the text more fully. A classic example of this concept of distinguishing between the *implied reader* and the *real reader* is found in my study on “The Passover Traditions in the First Century. Seymour Chatman in drawing attention to the meaning of the *implied reader* puts it this way: “The counterpart of the implied author is the *implied reader*—not the flesh-and-bones you or I sitting in our living rooms reading the book, but the audience presupposed by the narrative itself.”<sup>[16]</sup> Narrative criticism helps to narrow the gap between the *real reader* and the *implied reader*.<sup>[17]</sup>

## SCHOLARS DISAGREE

Scholars are divided over whether the Lord’s Supper occurred before the Passover (Kiddush meal) or during the Passover.<sup>[18]</sup> Joachim Jeremias advances the belief that the Last Supper occurred during the Passover, but, at the same time, he cites the conviction,

according to some scholars, that the Supper did not occur during the Passover since Matthew and Mark indicate that only one cup was used in the Last Supper; therefore, it could not have been the Passover since, in the time of Jesus, each one had his or her own cup.<sup>[19]</sup> This failure to grasp the significance of the words of Mathew and Mark has led some to deny that the Lord's Super occurred during the Passover—remember, cups were employed in the Passover. G. H. Box makes his arguments against the Last Supper as a Passover meal since both Matthew and Mark mention only one cup (container). Box, as well as many other scholars, is mistaken in this view; nevertheless, he writes with conviction that the Last Supper did not occur during the Passover:

In all the accounts it is noticeable that *one* Cup only is mentioned which was partaken of by all; whereas at the Passover a special point is made of each man having his own Cup to drink from. This is a point which is often overlooked, and to which it will be necessary to return.<sup>[20]</sup>

Since Box misunderstood the phraseology in Matthew and Mark concerning the “cup” saying, he then drew conclusion that denied an original witness’ testimony (Matthew) concerning the time frame of the Lord’s Supper—the Passover. Box states his reasons for denying the Lord’s Supper occurred during the Passover since both Matthew and Mark mention, according to his interpretation, only one cup. Jeremias, a contributor to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, writes concerning this dispute:

On the other hand, it is claimed that by the time of Jesus *individual cups were used* at the Passover meal; since, according to Mark 14.23 par., all the people present at the Last Supper drank from the same cup, supposedly this is evidence for the fact that the Last Supper could not have been a Passover meal.<sup>[21]</sup>

Box, and many other scholars, read **Mark 14:23**, not with the eyes of the *implied* reader, but with the eyes of the *real reader*, that is to say with the eyes of the twentieth or twenty-first century—falling into subjective dreamland. Unfortunately, the reading and interpretation of the Eucharistic sayings often flows from a fertile imagination, not the text itself. G. H. Box’s reasoning is a classic example of one who fails to read the text in the eyes of the original readers, and, as a result of this failure, he denies that the Last Supper occurred during the Passover meal. Yet, the Synoptics specifically state that the Last Supper took place during the Passover. Box writes with boldness concerning his denial of the Last Supper as having occurred during a Passover meal. Since, in his understanding, both Matthew and Mark mention only one cup, he concludes that this meal was a Kiddush (קִדּוּשׁ, q!DDWv, “sanctification”) meal, not a Passover meal since only one cup was employed.<sup>[22]</sup> In 1928, F. Gavin also denied that the Eucharist occurred during the Passover:

The *Berakha* par excellence was for the early Christians the Eucharist, which term may well have been the attempt to render the Hebrew noun into Greek. For the explanation of the origin of the Christian Eucharist, we must look rather to the Fellowship Supper of the Eve (the *Kiddush*) than to the Passover, and, in order to explain its significance and unique character, to the early evaluation of our Lord.<sup>[23]</sup>

What is the answer to the dilemma that scholars face in trying to determine the historical background to the Lord’s Supper? The answer lies in understanding the practice of the Passover in the time of Christ. Not only do some Christians fail to understand the traditions in the first century, but they also turn to Greek dictionaries (lexicons) to determine the meaning of the word *cup*. Dictionaries are extremely helpful, but the definition of a word does not necessarily define the word in its context. Prior to an examination of the Eucharistic sayings in the Synoptics and Paul, a few words about Greek lexicons are in order. Not all Greek lexicons or scholars so define the word *cup* as a drinking vessel in the various Eucharistic versions.

### UTILIZATION OF LEXICONS

#### Thayer’s Greek—Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament

Among the one-cup movement, many preachers and teachers rely heavily upon the use of lexicons to establish credence for their interpretation of the Eucharistic texts, especially *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*.<sup>[24]</sup> As one seeks to determine the meaning of a word in a given context, one should be conscious that a lexicon does not always tell the whole story. Even though dictionaries are important, one must also consult the context before assigning a particular meaning to a particular word. Since a lexicographer often employs his own understanding of the text, one must make sure that he or she is giving a definition that the author intended to convey in the telling of his or her story. One’s definition should be the meaning assigned by the author of the first-century, not the twenty-first century. To illustrate this point more clearly, this author wishes to cite the words of Joseph Henry Thayer, a Greek lexicographer. He was conscious of the dangers that lexicographers encounter when they seek to define a word or words. As a result of this awareness, he issues a warning in the use of lexicons:

The nature and use of the New Testament writings require that the lexicographer should not be hampered by a too rigid adherence to the rules of scientific lexicography. A student often wants to know not so much the inherent meaning of a word as the particular sense it bears in a given context or discussion:—or to state the same truth from another point of view, the lexicographer often cannot assign a particular New Testament reference to one or another of the acknowledged significations of a word without indicating his exposition of the passage in which the reference occurs. In such a case he is compelled to assume, at least to some extent, the functions of the exegete, although he can and should refrain from rehearsing the general arguments which support the interpretation adopted, as well as from arraying the objections to opposing interpretations.<sup>[25]</sup>

The lexicographers generally define the word *cup* (*ποτήριον*, *pothrion*) as a “drinking vessel.” If the lexicographer fails to grasp the context of the author, as Box and Gavin, he or she may fail in giving the correct definition of the word in context. Thayer, as stated above, cautions his readers with these words: “the lexicographer often cannot assign a particular New Testament reference to one or another of the acknowledged significations of a word without indicating his exposition of the passage in which the reference occurs.” An answer to the dilemma that one faces in trying to arrive at a correct definition is not etymology (word origins or growth of vocabulary). In other words, the growth of vocabulary is not adequate to discover its precise meaning in any given context. Two factors help in determining the meaning of a particular word: (1) context, and (2) historical

background surrounding the word. As one seeks to understand the context, one must be conscious that an authentic interpretation is one that relates matters of fact as they really happened. David Allen Black says, “It is important to remember that Greek words (like English ones) have a meaning that is context-determined to a significant degree.”<sup>[26]</sup>

It is in this vein that L. Berkhof writes: A word is never fully understood until it is apprehended as a living word, i.e., as it originated in the soul of the author.”<sup>[27]</sup> It is not uncommon for interpreters to interpret the words of Scripture with twenty-first century eyeglasses. In other words, many Christians transfer the authors of the first century to the twenty-first century, and then interpret words with modern day understanding. Berkhof is correct when he writes:

Moreover, he will have to transfer himself mentally into the first century A.D., and into oriental conditions. He must place himself on the standpoint of the author, and seek to enter into his very soul, until he, as it were, lives his life and thinks his thoughts. This means that he will have to guard carefully against the rather common mistake of transferring the author to the present day and making him speak the language of the twentieth century. If he does not avoid this, the danger exists, as McPheeerter expresses it, that “the voice he hears (will) be merely the echo of his own ideas” *Bible Student*, Vol. III, No. II.<sup>[28]</sup>

The admonition of Thayer and the counsel of Berkhof should be applied in one’s study of the Eucharistic words of Jesus, especially among Christians who are divided over the use of the number of drinking vessels in the observance of the Lord’s Supper. This author (Dallas Burdette) still has relatives of the one-cup persuasion that refuse fellowship with him. Debates are still conducted over the use of multiple cups in the distribution of the fruit of the vine. The Lord’s Supper represents unity, not division. The Body of Christ is fractured into warring factions over the Last Supper. The Christian community is alienated into militaristic splinter group over the use of individual cups in the Lord’s Supper. Before examining other Lexicographers concerning the meaning of the word *cup* in the Synoptic accounts and the Pauline account, a note is in order concerning division within the so-called restoration movement of the Churches of Christ.

### UNITY OR DIVISION One Cup

Unfortunately, the Lord’s Supper has been the cause of division and death down through the centuries, a Meal designed by God to unite His people. Within the Churches of Christ, there is a division, as stated above, over the use of multiple cups versus the use of one common cup for the distribution of the fruit of the vine. Many, not all, one-cup congregations refuse fellowship with those who use individual cups in the Lord’s Supper. The Churches of Christ also divided over the use of wine versus grape juice. Other congregations within the one-cup movement also divided over whether to break the bread or pinch the bread (that is to say, the bread must remain one whole).

These divisions should never have happened. The one-cup divisions resulted from certain Christians’ failure to look at the Eucharistic sayings in light of each writer of the New Testament. Since this Supper occurred within the context of a Passover meal, one must seek to understand the rituals observed during the time of Christ in order to interpret

correctly the Eucharistic sayings in the Synoptics and Pauline writings. In spite of what some advance in the one-cup and non-Sunday school fellowship, there is nothing in the Lord's Supper sayings in Matthew, Mark, Luke, nor Paul that teaches that Jesus employed one cup (container) from which all drank. The people in that day did not all drink from the same container during a meal anymore than individuals drink from the same glass or cup during a meal today. The traditional interpretation among the one-cup Christians is a forced interpretation of the text—in spite of their sincerity. This essay will briefly analyze some of the texts in order to bring, hopefully, unity among God's people.

### Communion Table: Center or East End of Church?

Before analyzing the various texts dealing with the Lord's Supper, another controversy is worthy of note to illustrate how Christians have used the Lord's Supper to create division, not unity—unity for which Jesus prayed and which the Lord's Supper conveys. Debate over the Communion has plagued God's people down through the ages. For instance, a case in point occurred during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649). William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury (1573-1645) sought to enforce canon law upon the Puritan churches.<sup>[29]</sup> One of the grievances that the Established Church had against the Puritans was over the location of the communion table. The Puritans wanted it in the middle of the church building, but the Established Church wanted it in the east end of the house of worship.<sup>[30]</sup> Even though the English people had endured the tyranny of the king, nevertheless, the Scotch Covenanters had rebelled. When the soldiers of Charles I invaded Scotland, their sympathies lay with the Scots. They broke into the churches and moved the communion tables into the middle of the building.<sup>[31]</sup> Christians, so it seems, have forgotten the central purpose of the Lord's Supper, as explained above. Emil Brunner, too, explains the sad situation, as early as 1936, in his remarks about the Sacraments:

The sacrament which was to have united Christians has become an apple of discord, rending Christendom up to the present day, and even setting by the ears our own reformers Luther and Zwingli. Hence it becomes necessary for us to ponder anew the meaning of that mysterious rite of the Church, which from ancient times has been described as a sacrament.<sup>[32]</sup>

### Differences in the Accounts

An examination of the Synoptic accounts and the Pauline account should help many Christians within the one-cup movement to come to a better understanding of what the communion is all about. Just a casual glance at the four accounts—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul—reveals that they all differ in some aspects. Neither Matthew nor Mark employ the phrase “after supper” (μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, meta to deipnhsai **[1 Corinthians 11:25; Luke 22:20]**), a phrase employed by Luke and Paul. This phrase is used to indicate that participation in this cup did not occur until after the Passover meal itself. In Matthew and Mark there is no separation between the bread and cup, but, on the other hand, this eating of the bread and the drinking of the third cup in the Passover is separated by the meal proper, which both Luke and Paul attest. None of the writers of the New Testament give a verbatim record of every detail concerning the observance of the Passover meal, a meal in which Jesus instituted His supper. Listen to Higgins as he explains:

2. In the accounts no mention is made of the paschal lamb and the bitter herbs.

The narratives, however, even the most primitive in form, that of Mark, are to be regarded not as verbatim records of every detail of the gathering in the upper room, but primarily as cultic formulae which reflect the liturgical practice of the early Church. That is why emphasis is laid on the bread and wine and the words spoken about them by Jesus, to the exclusion of other details which were of the first importance in any Passover meal, but had no place at all in the Church's Eucharist.[\[33\]](#)

Of the four writers, Paul is the only one who gives the name of the cup after supper—"The cup of blessing" ([10:16](#)). This is significant since the third cup used during the Passover is called "The Cup of Blessing." The confusion, among many Christians is the use of the singular word *cup*. This word *cup* is then interpreted as having reference to a literal container in the Lord's Supper. Another item that grabs one's attention is the cup sayings in Matthew/Mark versus Luke/Paul. The following chart illustrates the differences:

<b>Matthew 26:28</b>	<b>Luke 22:20</b>
<u>This is my blood of the<sup>b</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.</u>	<u>"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.</u>
<b>Mark 14:24</b>	<b>1 Corinthians 11:25</b>
<u>"This is my blood of the<sup>a</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many."</u>	<u>"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."</u>

### Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

Whether one reads "This is my blood of the covenant" or "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," both statements mean one and the same thing. "Blood" and "cup" are synonymous. Should the word *cup* be interpreted literally or figuratively? Did the four accounts use the word *cup* in a literal sense? In spite of Thayer's comments concerning the meaning of *cup* in the Eucharistic sayings, there are other scholars—equal in scholarship—who give another meaning—a figurative meaning. For instance, Leonhard Goppelt defines the word *cup* (*ποτήριον*, *pothrion*) as:

Contents: 1. The Usage. 2. The Cup in the literal Sense (Mt.23:25 f. par. Lk. 11:39 f.). 3. The figurative Use: a. The Cup of Wrath; b. The Cup of Suffering. 4. The Cup at the Lord's Supper: a. The Cup in the Eschatological Saying Lk. 22:17 f.; b. The Cup of the Interpretative Saying; c. The Cup of the Lord and the Cup of Demons (1 C.10).[\[34\]](#)

He does not include the "cup" in the Synoptic sayings as literal. Hermann Patsch also calls attention to the literal use of the word *cup* in the New Testament writings versus its figurative use. He does not place the literal meaning on the word *cup* in his essay on *ποτήριον* (*pothrion*):

The subst. ποτήριον, which corresponds with Heb. Kos, occurs 31 times in the NT, in the literal sense only in Mark 7:4; 9:41 par. Matthew 10:42; Matt 23:25f. par. Luke 11:39. Otherwise it is metaphorical (Gospels, Revelation) or used as a metonym (the eucharist tradition in the Synoptics and Paul). Only Rev 17:4 mentions the material of a drinking vessel; nowhere does its form (see BRL 181, illustration 43) play a role.[\[35\]](#)

Following these comments about the Greek word ποτήριον, he then gives additional comments about the two cups in Luke. He assigns the first cup as The Cup of Consecration, which he refers to as the *kiddush* over which the Seder is introduced with a benediction, and the third cup as the consecrated cup. In my judgment, he mistakenly identifies the first cup mentioned by Luke. If one follows the sequence of Luke, one assumes that the first cup mentioned by Luke is the second cup (The Cup of Proclamation, not The Cup of Consecration) and the third cup is The Cup of Blessing. In spite of this confusion, his comments are still worth citing:

3. If, as is probable, one can assume a Passover framework for Jesus' words at the Last Supper, then the cup in Luke 22:17 is the first (*kiddush*) cup over which the Seder is introduced with a benediction (*m P#s^j. 10:2*), the cup of the "interpretation" is the third cup (*m P#s^j. 10:7*), the consecrated cup" (Heb. Kos v#1 B#r\*k&, b. B#r 51a; *Jos. As. 8:9* [11]: ποτήριον εὐλογίας) after the main meal, over which Jesus gives thanks (Mark 14:23 par. Luke 22:10a/Matt 26:27/1 Cor 11:25a; cf 10:16)—εὐλογέω 3. In the interpretation (made explicit in Luke 22:20b par. 1 Cor 11:25b) the vessel is always a metonym for its contents, the wine.[\[36\]](#)

One observes a great deal of confusion on the part of scholars as they seek to disclose the interpretation of the Eucharist, which is self-evident as one reads after the scholars. Sometimes, one comes away with the idea that Jesus handed His disciples a literal cup and that they all drank from the same cup. Goppelt recognizes that each person present at the Passover had his own cup: "They are all to drink of this cup, or, less probably, to fill their own cups from it. The common drinking united the disciples in table fellowship under the saying uttered with this cup."[\[37\]](#) The expression "this cup" does not refer to one literal container for the whole group, but rather to the 'formal drinking' of the third cup, which is called "The Cup of Blessing." "This cup" is equivalent to the third filling of their individual cups. Four different times during the Passover, they filled their cups. Each filling was referred to by a particular name—(1) The Cup of Consecration, (2) The Cup of Proclamation, (3) The Cup of Blessing, and (4) The Cup of Hallel. Even though each person had his own cup, this drinking still represented the disciples in united table fellowship. Whether one drinks from the same container or from his own individual cup, one still participates in table fellowship—a fellowship that commemorates the death of Jesus until He comes again.

One observes differences between Matthew/Mark and Paul/Luke, as illustrated in the chart above. For example, Paul and Luke begin with τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἷματι, touto to pothrion Jh kainh diaqhkh en tw Jamati, ("This cup is the new testament in my blood," [\[1 Corinthians 11:25\]](#) and [\[Luke 22:20\]](#)). On the other hand, Matthew and Mark begin with τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης, touto gar estin to Jaima mou ths diaqhkhs ("For this is my blood of the covenant" [\[Matthew 26:28\]](#) and

**Mark 14:24]**). Goppelt writes: “Whether the interpretation begins with τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον (Paul, Lk.) or with τοῦτο (Mk., Mt.), it refers, not to the cup, but to its contents, (red) wine. Nevertheless, the second element in the Lord’s Supper is almost always called the cup rather than the wine in the NT.”<sup>[38]</sup> Again, he pens: “In Lk. 22:20b 1 C. 11:25b the cup is used metonym. For what it contains.”<sup>[39]</sup> Whether one says, “This is my blood” or “this cup,” one is saying the same thing. The emphasis is upon the red wine as representative of the new covenant, not a literal drinking vessel representative of the covenant.

The word *covenant* is a word that is frequently misapplied by many Christians. This author (Dallas Burdette) grew up in the one-cup movement in which the “covenant,” or “new testament” was identified as twenty-seven books called the “New Testament.” This identification was and is a misunderstanding of the Greek word διαθήκη (diaqhkh), which is equivalent to the Hebrew תִּינְגַּד (B=r!, T), which also means “covenant.” William Barclay defines a covenant as: “A Covenant is a relationship of friendship into which two people enter, with mutual pledges of fidelity. In the New Testament the covenant is the relationship between God and his people.”<sup>[40]</sup> Mark, author of the Gospel of Mark, employs a phrase that is difficult for some to understand—“blood of the covenant” (αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης, Jaima mou ths diaqhkhs) [Mark 14:25].

The confusion results from the phraseology—noun in the genitive case. The Greeks often used the genitive of a noun instead of an adjective. In English, one is more likely to say, “This is my covenant blood,” rather than “This is my blood of the covenant.” By changing this phrase to “covenant blood,” then the word *Covenant* is employed as an adjective, not as a noun in the genitive (a noun in the genitive expresses possession<sup>[41]</sup>). Not only is the “blood” representative of the covenant, but, at the same time, the blood of Christ also seals this new relationship between God and humanity—a relationship based, not on works, but on the finished work of Christ upon Calvary. This view is the very opposite of the one-cup movement that maintains that the literal cup represents the new covenant and the blood seals the new covenant—two distinct emblems. An example of the literal cup representing the New Testament is found in the writings of E. H. Miller (1909-1989), one of the most outstanding defenders of the one-cup and nonSunday school movement; he puts it this way:

“He (Jesus) said, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood,’ meaning, the new covenant is sealed, ratified, or sanctioned by His blood.”

Here, you see the cup is not the blood that “**the new covenant (new testament) is sealed, ratified, or sanctioned by**”. No! this shows “this cup is the new covenant (New Testament ‘sealed, ratified, or sanctioned’) in my blood.” Yes, the cup represents the New covenant or New Testament that was sealed, ratified, or sanctioned in or by Christ’s blood, and the fruit of the vine represents the blood of Christ which the New Covenant or New Testament was sealed, ratified, or sanctioned in, or by.<sup>[42]</sup>

Miller writes about three emblems in the Lord’s Supper: (1) Bread, (2) Cup [literal container], and (3) Fruit of the vine [grape juice]. He fails, in my judgment, to understand the phrase “blood of the covenant” or the phrase “in my blood.” What does “in my blood” mean? William Barclay explains the words this way:

What is the meaning of the phrase *in my blood*? The Hebrew word B= (the + is

pronounced as in *the*) means *at the price of*, and it is frequently translated by the Greek word en, the word which is used here in the phrase usually translated in my blood; and it is true that the basic meaning of en is in. David demands Michal to wife, for he has betrothed her at the price of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. *At the price of* is in Hebrew B=, and in the Greek of the Septuagint en. I would suggest that the en in the phrase *in my blood* means *at the price of my blood.*" The covenant blood is the blood which makes the covenant possible, the price of the relationship.<sup>[43]</sup>

The red wine represents the covenant and, at the same time, the red wine represents the blood of the covenant, which blood seals the covenant. As one seeks to understand the Eucharistic sayings, one can only gain a true understanding of the richness of that whole when one allows the parts of the various accounts to speak for themselves. One cannot impose a meaning it will not bear. One must never go to the Bible looking for what will superficially meet one's interpretation. An honest assessment of the detailed evidence, as found in all the Eucharistic texts, reveals a different conclusion from the one-cup movement. One must accept the full relevance of the historical details as found in the Scriptures, not isolated texts from its context. One can learn from the patient study of trained scholars. It is in this regard that Johannes Behm is called forth to give testimony to help clarify the confusion on the part of many sincere believers. Behm correctly observed:

The most important Synoptic passage is the saying of Jesus in relation to the cup at the institution of the Lord's Supper, Mk. 14:24": τούτο ἐστιν τὸ αἷμα μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν (Ma. 26:28: ...τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχ. εἰς ἄφεσιν ἀμαρτιῶν) and 1 C. 11:25 in a traditional form: τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καὶνὴ διαθήκη ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἷματι (on which is based Lk. 22:20 -- ἐστιν, + τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον). Whatever Aramaic expression Jesus used, if He spoke of the διαθήκη of the last days on the basis of Jer. 31:31 ff., then according to Mk. He described the red wine in the cup as His blood of the διαθήκη (αἷμα I, 174). Or according to the Pauline tradition He described the cup (ποτήριον), i.e., its contents, as the new διαθήκη in virtue of His blood. Age, independence and difficulty suggest that the Pauline form is the older. Mk. has assimilated the saying to that concerning the bread and to Ex. 24:8: ιδοὺ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης. The saying in the Pauline form is to the effect that the blood (or death) of Jesus establishes the new διαθήκη, and that the wine in the Lord's Supper is thus a representation of the new διαθήκη. Since Jeremiah (with Dt. Is.) was for Jesus the most familiar of all the prophets, we are undoubtedly to relate His saying concerning the new διαθήκη to Jer. 31:31 ff., whose counterpart, the διαθήκη at Sinai after the Exodus was constituted by blood.<sup>[44]</sup>

Whether one says, "**This is my blood of the covenant**" (**Matthew 26:25; Mark 14:24**) or "**This cup is the new covenant**" (**Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25**), one is saying the same thing. The blood of Christ represents the covenant, and, at the same time, it is the blood of Christ that ratifies, or guarantees, the actualization of the new divine order, that is to say, the new covenant, or new relationship between God and humanity. The violet death of Christ establishes the new divine order promised in **Jeremiah 31:31** ff. The use of one literal container in the distribution of the red wine or a plurality of cups to distribute the red wine does not destroy the imagery or symbolism.

The meal is a reminder of the historical fact of the death, burial, and resurrection of

Jesus. Both the bread and wine are symbols of redemption. In the observance of the Lord's Supper, this external rite impresses upon the senses of God's people the wonder of it all, that is to say, salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ upon the Tree. When Christians assemble to partake of the Table of the Lord, this activity is horizontal in nature, that is, it binds the people of God together. There is a sense in which Christians pledge their loyalty to Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father. God frames the new covenant with His own blood. The cup, or red wine, stands for the covenant and, simultaneously, actualizes this new union, or agreement.

A. J. B. Higgins, too, correctly points out that the blood of Christ is representative of two things. Listen as he captures this line of reasoning: "The cup is the sign and pledge of a share in the new covenant."<sup>[45]</sup> What is the "cup"? Once more Higgins writes: "The blood or death of Jesus founds the new covenant, and so the wine represents the new covenant, the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31 ff."<sup>[46]</sup> Just a perusal of the Eucharistic accounts reveal that the real meaning of the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of the death of Christ upon the Cross. Scott McCormick's assessment of the "new covenant" is full of insight:

So the hope for a Suffering Servant, again like all Old Testament hope which was projected into the end-time, constituted a hope for a "new" covenant, a fully new and right relationship between God and his people. That would be *his* doing, same as the announcement itself was his. All of it rested on his initiative and the eternal sureness of his purpose in calling Israel in the first place.<sup>[47]</sup>

I. Howard Marshall, too, calls attention to the diversity in the Matthew/Mark and Luke/Paul accounts. His comments about the meaning of the word *cup* in Paul is worth citing, especially for its clarity concerning the significance of blood and covenant:

The saying over the cup takes the form 'This is my blood of the covenant' in Mark; this wording appears to echo Exodus 24:8, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you.' In Luke and Paul, however, we have the form 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood'. Here 'This' is identified explicitly as the cup, and the cup (or its contents) typifies not the blood which inaugurates the covenant but the covenant which is inaugurated by the blood; the addition of the word 'new' produces an allusion to Jeremiah 31:31.<sup>[48]</sup>

William Barclay (1907-1978) proposes two questions in seeking to understand the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He asks: "What does it mean to say that the bread is his body and the cup is his blood?"<sup>[49]</sup> Back in 1970, this author visited E. H. Miller (his uncle) to share with him some of the things in Barclay's book on the Lord's Supper. One of the items concerned Barclay's translation of the Short Text of the Sinaitic Syriac in Luke 22:20b: "This my blood is the new covenant, which is being poured out for you."<sup>[50]</sup> Miller (1909-1989)<sup>[51]</sup> affirmed that no Greek manuscript gives such a rendering. He also declared that Barclay was wrong. At the time, I had no way of proving Barclay's translation correct, other than I relied upon his scholarship and integrity as a Christian. Sometime later (1973), I purchased a book by Bruce M. Metzger in which he gives the Greek text of this Sinaitic Syriac manuscript. The following is a chart of the Nestle Greek text and the Sinaitic Syriac text:

Sinaitic Syriac

The Nestle Greek Text	
Luke 22:20b	Luke 22:20b
Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἷματί. “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.”	Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμα μου ἡ διαθήκη ἡ καινὴ. <sup>[52]</sup> “This is my blood the new covenant.”

From this chart one observes that the Sinaitic Syriac has “blood” rather than “cup” as representative of the new covenant. Once more, the words of I. Howard Marshal are informative: “For Lk. the cup, i.e. its contents (L. Goppelt, TDNT VI, 155, n. 70), symbolizes the new covenant, in the sense that the new covenant is brought into being by what it signifies, namely, the sacrificial death of Jesus.”<sup>[53]</sup> In this same vein, Vincent Taylor writes: “Of this life the wine is both the symbol and the means by which it is appropriated, in harmony with the words of Ex. xxiv. 11.”<sup>[54]</sup>

Again, his words are to the point: “The ‘covenant’ is that relationship of lordship and obedience which God establishes between Himself and men, and ‘the blood of the covenant’ is the sign of its existence and the means by which it is effected.”<sup>[55]</sup> Once more, Vincent is justified in his remarks concerning Paul’s phrase (τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστιν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἷματί) as meaning the “content of the Cup.”<sup>[56]</sup> Again, he rightly observes: “Mark and Matthew, as much as Paul and Luke, compare the wine with the blood by the shedding of which the New Covenant is established.”<sup>[57]</sup> Leonhard Goppelt comments are worthy of citation:

Whether the interpretation begins with τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον (Paul. LK.) or with τοῦτο alone (Mk., Mt.), it refers, not to the cup, but to its contents, (red) wine. Nevertheless, the second element in the Lord’s Supper is almost always called the cup rather than the wine in the NT.<sup>[58]</sup>

### COMMON CUP OR INDIVIDUAL CUPS IN THE PASSOVER?

Many Christians make a difference between the cup and its contents, but this view is untenable from the context of each of the Synoptic writers or Paul. The scholars do not agree concerning the use of the common cup or cups. Basically, this confusion is over the identification of the time of the institution of the Last Supper. Did this meal occur during the Passover or a Kiddush meal? In the Kiddush meal, a common cup was used, but in the Passover, individual cups were employed in the four formal drinkings. Some scholars argue that since the Gospels indicate that Jesus used a “common cup” (single), therefore, this meal could not have occurred during the Passover.<sup>[59]</sup>

The scholars that this author (Dallas Burdette) has studied appear confused as to the true nature of the Passover and the Gospel accounts of the event as it transpired on the eve of the Passover. For example, some scholars argue that since individual cups were employed, then, this could not have been the Passover.<sup>[60]</sup> Joachim Jeremias calls attention to G. H. Box who denied that the Lord’s Supper occurred during the Passover:

On the other hand, it is claimed that by the time of Jesus *individual cups were used* at the Passover meal; since, according to Mark 14.23 par., all the people present at the Last Supper drank from the same cup, supposedly this is evidence for the fact that the Last Supper could not have been a Passover

meal. Finally, it is explained that each participant in the Passover meal was supposed to have *his own dish* before him,, and this stands in contrast to the eating from the common dish presupposed by Mark 14.20.[\[61\]](#)

Box, like so many other scholars, failed to understand the language of the Synoptic Gospels concerning the “cup sayings.” This misunderstanding will be dealt with in detail later in this essay. As a result of the nature of the language in the Gospels, many scholars are unsure as to whether a common cup or multiple cups were utilized. As a result of this confusion, Vincent Taylor writes about this uncertainty of individual cups or one common cup in the Passover: “But the evidence for the Passover usage in respect of cups in the first century . . . is too uncertain to sustain an argument either way.[\[62\]](#) Jeremias also reasons that there is room for doubt as to whether Jesus used the common cup or individual cups. He writes:

As regards the Passover meal in particular, the words of Pes. 10:2: ‘the first cup has been mixed for him’ – for the *paterfamilias*? [Beer, *Pesachim*, 190] for each quest? [Billerbeck IV, 59, 61; Strack, *Pesahim*, 32; E. Baneth in *Mischnaioth II*, 238n. 8; 239n. 11.] leave room for some doubt whether the common or individual cup is meant, although the context favours the former.  
[\[63\]](#)

Again, one witnesses another reputable scholar who straddles the fence concerning the actual practice of the Passover in the time of Christ and cannot determine whether Christ used one common cup or individual cups. The confusion over whether Jesus used a “single cup” or “individual cups” is as a result of not discerning the language employed in the Passover. Whenever one reads the language of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul, one must read the various texts as the *implied readers* read the texts. This essay seeks to set forth from Jewish sources the meaning and interpretation of the controversial texts.

For example, “The Cup of Blessing” that Paul alludes to in **1 Corinthians 10:16** has to do with the name attached to the third cup utilized in the Passover—called The Cup of Blessing. The filling of their cups after the meal proper (after supper) is called among the Jews The Cup of Blessing. On four different occasions during the Passover, they filled their cups; each filling was referred to with a particular name—(1) The Cup of Consecration, (2) The Cup of Proclamation, (3) The Cup of Blessing, and (4) The Cup of Hallel. In others words, there were four ritualistic formal drinkings. Did Jesus institute His Supper during the Passover? The Synoptic writers agree that the celebration took place during this meal. The following Scripture citations sets forth this belief:

### **Book of Matthew**

<sup>17</sup> On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” <sup>18</sup> He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” <sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. <sup>20</sup> When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. (**Matthew 26:17-20**)

### **Book of Mark**

<sup>12</sup> On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" <sup>13</sup> So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. <sup>14</sup> Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' <sup>15</sup> He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." <sup>16</sup> The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. <sup>17</sup> When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup> While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." (Mark 14:12-18)

### Book of Luke

<sup>7</sup> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." <sup>9</sup> "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. <sup>10</sup> He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, <sup>11</sup> and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' <sup>12</sup> He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." <sup>13</sup> They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. <sup>14</sup> When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:7-17)

This internal evidence from Matthew, Mark, and Luke states clearly that the Last Supper occurred during the time of this Jewish festivity. It is also significant that the practice of "reclining" rather than sitting was the practice during the Passover in the time of Christ. During this period of their festivities, the Jews used four ritual cups of wine, or four formal drinkings, as mentioned above. Wine also was used in the Passover, and the breaking of the bread into pieces was also the practice. In addition to these customs, the Jews also introduced the singing of psalms into this festivity—**Psalms 113-118**. The practice of reclining is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Gustaf Dalman's comments concerning the practice of reclining in the first century is revealing:

According to Mk. xiv. 15; Lk. xxii. 12, the room given for the Passover meal would be 'furnished and ready' (ἐστρωμένον) for the purpose. In fact, not every room could be used for it. Although it is commanded in the Law (Exod. xii.11) that the Israelites should eat the Passover with girdled garment, staves in hands and sandals on feet (i.e. prepared to start in haste on a long journey), this referred to 'that time' only, i.e. to the time of the Exodus, but not to 'all generations'. The Jews differ in this from the Samaritans, who even now swallow down the Passover lamb in great haste, as if preparing for a sudden journey; but the former consider it essential that the eating of the Passover

should have the real character of a festive meal, in which free men, not slaves, take part. The slave eats standing; the Israelite, reclining at the Passover meal, demonstrates that his people had attained freedom from Egyptian bondage. This, even the poorest Jew is obliged to show forth; he partakes of the meal to this day neither standing nor sitting, but reclining. [\[64\]](#)

The one-cup and nonSunday school churches of Christ also separated over the manner of breaking the bread in the Lord's Supper. Some of these Christians became known as bread pinchers while others were known as bread breakers. If the bread pinchers had studied the historical background to the Passover, they would have discovered that the bread was broken into pieces and passed around by the host. I. Howard Marshall writes:

At an ordinary Jewish meal, as distinct from the sacrificial meals which have just been discussed, the religious aspect was expressed by the giving of thanks to God at both the beginning and the end. The commencement of the meal was marked by the head of the household taking a piece of bread in his hands and saying a prayer of thanks over it: 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, who bringest forth bread from the earth'. The bread was then broken into pieces and shared among all those present. It has been suggested that 'in this way every participant in the meal received a share of the benediction', but this seems to be a mistaken notion since the prayer was not a way of blessing the bread so that it might become a vehicle of blessing to other people but rather an act of blessing, i.e. of thanking, God for his goodness in providing it. There was probably no special significance in the breaking and distribution of the bread; it was simply the ordinary way of dividing up a loaf so that each person present might have a share. Similarly, at the end of the meal the host took a cup of wine, known as 'the cup of bless', and gave thanks to God for it, after which all present drank. [\[65\]](#)

Jeremias also corroborates Marshall's testimony with the following comments:

It was J. Lightfoot, as far as I can see, who first mistook this initial dividing (Maimonides uses jlk "to divide", not Prs 'to split') before the blessing for the 'breaking of bread' after the blessing, and other have followed him in this mistake right down to the present. The truth is that at the Passover, as at every other meal, the blessing was said first, and then the unleavened bread was broken and the fragments distributed. The sequence 'blessing—breaking of the bread' (Mark 14.22 par. 'having blessed he broke') is therefore in full accord with the Passover ritual. [\[66\]](#)

I. Howard Marshall lists a number of rules practiced in the religious aspects of Jewish meals. In this discussion, cited above, he, too, like Jeremias, calls attention to the practice of breaking the bread into pieces. When Matthew writes: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "**Take and eat; this is my body**" (**Matthew 26:26**). In other words, Jesus took bread and broke into pieces. Even though the bread was fragmented into pieces, Jesus could still speak of the fragmented pieces as His body. Paul, too, speaks of the body of Christ as consisting of many member, but at the same time, he still refers to the many as "one body" (**1 Corinthians 10:17**). G. H. Box writes: "**and he brake it**. The broken bread is a

symbolical reference to the Passion; ‘this [broken bread] is My Body’.”<sup>[67]</sup> Barclay also calls attention to the practice of breaking the bread during the Passover:

9. First, grace was said, and small pieces of the unleavened bread were distributed to the company. The Passover grace is: “Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who bringest forth fruit from the earth. Blessed art thou who hast sanctified us with thy commandment, and enjoined us to eat unleavened cakes.”<sup>[68]</sup>

Marshall, author of Commentary on Luke in Eerdman’s New International Greek Testament Commentary series, writes, as cited above, “The bread was then broken into pieces and shared among all those present.<sup>[69]</sup> When one fails to understand the practice in the Passover in the time of Jesus, one frequently misunderstands the Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper. The breaking of bread is a classic example among many within the Churches of Christ. Box, as cited above, is another example of failure to read the Synoptic accounts in light of the Passover in the time of Christ.

Another comment by Slater and Box illustrates their failure to interpret the Eucharistic sayings correctly: “**he took a cup.** The distribution of a common cup is not a feature of the Passover (where each man has his own cup). It may have been suggested by the weekly ceremony of the *kiddush* in which a common cup was employed.”<sup>[70]</sup> These two authors are confused over the language of the Synoptics. Both denied the Last Supper occurred during the Passover since in the Passover each person had his or her own cup. In their reading of the Synoptic accounts, both men failed to read in light of the *implied reader*. He interprets “the cup” as a common cup, not the name assigned to a formal drinking—The Cup of Blessing. The Lord’s Supper is not about one common cup or multiple cups. One cup or multiple cups does not take away from the real meaning of the Eucharist—commemoration of the death of Christ, that is, His atoning death.<sup>[71]</sup>

The picture of the Last Supper comes into sharper focus when the Synoptic accounts and Paul are compared with the ancient order of the Passover service. The *implied readers*, the original recipients of the Gospels and Pauline writings, understood the Jewish Passover with all its traditions. Just a casual glance at the New Testament writers reveal that the authors did not describe all that happened during their festive meal. It is self-evident that the authors did not intend to give the *ipsissima verba* of the Eucharistic sayings of Jesus, that is to say, the actual words in full. Higgins submits that

In the accounts no mention is made of the paschal lamb and the bitter herbs. The narratives, however, even the most primitive in form, that of Mark, are to be regarded not as verbatim records of every detail of the gathering in the upper room, but primarily as cultic formulae which reflect the liturgical practice of the early Church. That is why emphasis is laid on the bread and wine and the words spoken about them by Jesus, the exclusion of other details which were of the first importance in any Pasover meal, but had no place at all in the Church’s Eucharist.<sup>[72]</sup>

The authors of the New Testament writings do not give a detailed description of the Last Supper, but rather they give a brief account of the Eucharist as it began to be celebrated after the Resurrection. W. D. Davies rightly points out that the various

accounts do not record the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus' words. He writes firmly: "Similarly we are not to understand from Paul's account of the Last Supper that he is quoting the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, but we are to find there the precipitate of those words percolated through the mind of a Rabbi."<sup>[73]</sup> D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge also write:

Pedantic precision and verbatim quotation do not seem to be their goals. Yet those same changes warn us against facile accusations that the writers are introducing errors of fact or substance. Just as a modern writer might condense a lengthy discussion and tell of it in his own idiom and in a fraction of the total number of words actually spoken, without being charged with lies, inventiveness, distortion, or deceit, so the Gospel writers must be allowed the same freedom. This is the nature of reportage, even reportage designed to make theological and historical points.<sup>[74]</sup>

It is evident that the authors of the Gospels do not allege to give word for word quotes from Jesus or the events that transpired on the night of the Passover, but rather they summarize and use their own language to provide an accurate impression of the historical substance of the surroundings on that eventful evening. Since the disciples did not supply complete details practiced in the Passover in the time of Christ, one must go to outside sources to fill in the gaps in the Synoptic accounts and the Pauline account. One such source is the *Mishna*.<sup>[75]</sup> The Mishna, compiled between AD 100 and 210, covers every aspect of Jewish life and presents a picture of the custom, traditions, and observances at the time of Christ.<sup>[76]</sup> Jeremias cautions individuals in the use of the Mishnah in establishing the use of individual cups in the time of Jesus. Even though Jeremias has reservations about the Mishna, which is one part of the Talmud, one should be conscious that the Talmud<sup>[77]</sup> is also a written code of the traditions that existed 200 years before Christ.<sup>[78]</sup> Jeremias writes with advice and caution about the overall use of the *Mishna*:

As regards the Passover meal in particular, the words of Pes. 10.2, 4, 7 (10.2: 'the first cup has been mixed for him'—for the paterfamilias for each guest?) leave room for some doubt whether the common or individual cup is meant, although the context favours the former. However, even if the Mishnah should presuppose the individual cup, its testimony would scarcely be valid for Jesus' time. For the Mishnah describes the celebration of the Passover as it was held after AD 70, when it was no longer celebrated by the whole nation in Jerusalem but by individual families in the places where they lived. More significance is to be attached to the fact that b. Pes. 108b reports that in some cases the paterfamilias invited his children and other members of the family to drink from his cup; this could be the survival of an earlier custom.<sup>[79]</sup>

Even though the Mishnah was assembled after AD 100, this fact does not mean that the information contained in this work does not represent the practices in the first century or before. The above paragraph by Jeremias reveals that he misunderstood the phrase "The Cup of Blessing." He identifies the terminology as having reference to the "common cup," or one cup (singular) from which the participants drank. He failed to look through the eyes of the authors of the first century. Four different times during the Passover ceremony, the Jews filled their cups. Each ritualistic filling, or formal drinking, received a different name. "The Cup of Blessing," for instance, referred to the third formal drinking

following the eating of the Passover lamb. As stated above, each filling received a specific name, or title, to celebrate, or represent, a different aspect of the Exodus from Egypt—The Cup of Consecration, The Cup of Proclamation, The Cup of Blessing, and The Cup of Hallel.

Jeremias, so it seems, is confused as to the number of containers used in the Passover. Higgins, too, wavered in his views concerning the use of cups or a common cup during the Passover observed by Christ.[\[80\]](#) The confusion stems from a wooden literalness of the various accounts by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul. In other words, both of these scholars, as well as many others, read the accounts with twentieth-century bifocals rather than first-century bifocals. Jeremias' treatment of the common cup cannot be regarded as satisfactory in light of the language surrounding the phrase "The Cup of Blessing." He jumped to an unsatisfactory position in regard to the common cup:

It must therefore be regarded as most probable that the earlier custom was to share one common cup at the Passover meal, at least in the case of the cup of blessing, the third of the four Passover cups, and that Mark 14:23 therefore reflects the situation of a Passover meal at the time of Jesus.[\[81\]](#)

One cannot place an inordinate amount of weight on his argument against individual cups. A major objection to his methodology is the subjectivity that he displays in seeking to maintain that Jesus and His apostles all drank from a common cup. One should keep in mind that the Passover was a feast; people no more drank after one another in their meals than people do today. The following citation shows the subjectivity in his thinking and writing:

For the time of Jesus, however, a simple technical consideration seems to me to be decisive: were there enough eating utensils in that overcrowded holy city for each one of the pilgrims who filled its houses, courtyards and rooftops in tens of thousands for the Passover celebration to have his own cup? Anyone who knows something of oriental households will certainly have to answer in the negative.[\[82\]](#)

As far as we know, Jesus, along with the Twelve, participated in the Passover—thirteen in all. Mark calls attention to the preparation required before Jesus met with His disciples to eat the meal. Jesus says, "**He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready, Make preparations for us there**" (**Mark 14:15**).

## INNOVATIONS IN THE PASSOVER Reclining on Dining Couches

Before analyzing the Greek text of the various accounts to demonstrate that the word *cup*, as utilized in the Gospel accounts, is figurative and refers to the blood, a detour is in order. This alternative route surrounds innovations introduced into the Passover in the time of Christ that did not appear in the first Passover. It is significant that Jesus involved Himself, along with His disciples, in actions that were modernistic, or revolutionary, into the Pasover as recorded in the Book of Exodus. Even if Jesus used one common cup, which He did not, does this practice mean that Christians of all ages must drink from one drinking vessel in the observance of the Lord's Supper? Surely not! Since all the Synoptics call attention to the posture of reclining during the Passover, is this still binding

upon His disciples today? Definitely not! In the Passover in Jesus' day, wine was employed during the Passover. Does this forbid unfermented grape juice? Of course not!

Even though there were alterations from the original Passover, these changes were not anti-Scriptural. Something may be *unscriptural* but not *antiscriptural*. In other words, Jesus and His apostles violated no principle of commemoration set forth by God in the original Passover. Reclining during the meal and the use of four cups of wine were innovations. Yet, in the time of Christ, this was fashionable. The Passover observed by Jesus included details that were not practiced in the original Passover described by the Torah.<sup>[83]</sup> Ceil Rosen, a Jew who found Jesus as her Messiah and is a free-lance writer, and Moishe Rosen, her husband, founder and director of Jews for Jesus, writes about the first century observance:

By the first century, the Passover observance included several new customs in addition to the obligations described in the Torah account. Already, a set form of service called the Seder, meaning “order of service,” was in use. The celebrants reclined at the table in the Babylonian custom of free men. (Slaves stood in attendance while their masters ate.) The ceremony included ritual hand washings and set prayers. The celebrants drank four cups of wine as a symbol of joy. Oral tradition contained in the Mishnah commanded that even the poorest person must drink the minimum four cups, even if he had to sell himself to do labor or had to borrow money in order to buy the wine.<sup>[84]</sup>

In the original Passover (פָּסָח, P#s^j), wine was not, at least as far as the record reveals, employed. Yet in the time of Christ, wine was a part of the Passover. The practice of reclining rather than sitting during the Pasover is noticed by Nathan Isaacs in an article (“Passover”) in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*: “Instead of eating in haste, as in the Egyptian Passover, it is customary to recline at this meal in token of Israel’s freedom.”<sup>[85]</sup> Jeremias, too, comments on this ritual during the time of Christ:

A further point on which the Synoptics (Mark 14:18; Matt. 28:20; Luke 22:14) and John (13:12, 23, 25, 28) agree is that Jesus and his disciples *reclined* at table at the Last Supper. This also is not to be taken as a matter of course! For at the time of Jesus the diners *sat* down (Heb. y^v^B, Aram. y#T#B) as we know from rabbinical sources.<sup>[86]</sup>

In the original Passover, it appears from the context of Exodus that the individuals stood in the eating of the meal. Jeremias gives the following information in a footnote (# 2):

J. Pes. 10:37b. 53f.: ‘R. Levi (c.300) has said: ‘because slaves eat standing, here (at the Passover meal) people should recline to eat, to signify that they have passed from slavery to freedom.’ Ex. 12: 11 was regarded as a rule that was valid only for the actual exodus itself.<sup>[87]</sup>

Luke reports Jesus' requesting His disciples to make ready for the Passover this way:

As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters,<sup>11</sup> and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my

disciples?’<sup>12</sup> He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there. (Luke 22:1—12)

The English translation “furnished” is from the Greek word στρώννυμι (strwmnumi, “to spread”). Jesus is telling them that they will find an upper room in which they will discover carpets with dining couches supplied with cushions. Luke, in this same vein, discloses the following: “When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined (ἀνέπεσεν, anepesen) at the table” (22:14). The verb “reclined” is from the Greek word ἀναπίπτω (anapiptw), which means to lie down, recline, especially at a meal. Matthew also registers this practice: “When evening came, Jesus was reclining (ἀνέκειτο, anekeito) at the table with the Twelve” (Matthew 26:20). Mark also writes: “While they were reclining (ἀνακειμένων, anakeimenwn) at the table eating, he said, ‘I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me’” (Mark 14:18). The lengthy words of Gustaf Dalman is informative:

According to Mk. xiv. 15; Lk. xxii. 12, the room given for the Passover meal would be ‘furnished and ready’ (ἐστρωμένον, estrwmenon) for the purpose. In fact, not every room could be used for it. Although it is commanded in the Law (Exod. xii. 11) that the Israelites should eat the Passover with girdled garment, staves in hands and sandals on feet (i.e. prepared to start in haste on a long journey), this referred to ‘that time’ only, i.e. to the time of the Exodus, but not to ‘all generations. The Jews differ in this from the Samaritans, who even now swallow down the Passover lamb in great haste, as if preparing for a sudden journey; but the former consider it essential that the eating of the Passover should have the real character of a festive meal, in which free men, not slaves, take part. The slave eats standing; the Israelite, reclining at the Passover meal, demonstrates that his people had attained freedom from Egyptian bondage. This even the poorest Jew is obliged to show forth; he partakes of the meal to this day neither standing nor sitting, but reclining.<sup>[88]</sup>

Just a perusal of the words reported by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul reveal that the writers left out most of the details concerning the Passover. There was no reason to give all the details since the *implied readers* understood this history. The authors of the Synoptic Gospels give “bits and pieces” of what transpired. For instance, Luke gives more information than any of the other Synoptic authors or Paul. Luke is the only one that mentions two of the four cups in the Passover.

<sup>7</sup> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.” <sup>9</sup> “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked. <sup>10</sup> He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters,<sup>11</sup> and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’<sup>12</sup> He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.”<sup>13</sup> They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. <sup>14</sup> When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this

Passover with you before I suffer.<sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”<sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you.<sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”<sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:7-20)

From Luke’s account, it is noticeable that one is not reading *ipsissima verba* of the events that actually transpired in the Last Supper. One also observes that the breaking of bread into pieces occurred between the drinking of two cups. Some scholars refer the first cup to The Cup of Consecration rather than to The Cup of Proclamation (2<sup>nd</sup> formal drinking—ritualistic cup—in which the story of the Exodus was told). As stated above, the cup after supper was the third cup—The Cup of Blessing. On the other hand, Paul is the only one that mentions the name of the third cup (**1 Corinthians 10:16**). Neither Matthew nor Mark mentions all of the details found in Luke or Paul. Also, one discovers that neither Matthew nor Mark calls attention to the time frame of the drinking of the third cup—the phrase “after supper” is conspicuously absent from both Matthew and Mark.

As one seeks to interpret the bread and wine sayings, this author has placed a parallel account of the Last Supper with the Passover traditions. In the following chart, one will find the paschal context placed alongside of the Synoptic writers as well as Paul’s words:

PASSOVER	LAST SUPPER
	<p><b>Luke 22:14-16 (NIV)</b></p> <p><sup>14</sup> When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.<sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”</p>
<p><b>1. Hors d'oeuvre.</b> The head of the household over the first cup pronounces the blessing for the wine, which is then drunk by him and the others present. The first blessing is the <i>kiddush</i>, the second would have been in the traditional form, ‘Blessed art thou who createst the fruit of the vine,’ then are eaten green herbs, bitter herbs, and <i>baroseth</i>, a sauce consisting of fruits, spices, and vinegar into which the bitter herbs</p>	<p><b>Luke 22:17-18 (NIV)</b></p> <p><sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you.<sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”</p>

are dipped.[\[89\]](#)

**2. Haggadah.** When the food (unleavened bread, the roast lamb, wine, bitter herbs, etc.) for the meal proper is brought in, the son in a household asks his father why this night differs from other nights in several respects, particularly in that all the bread is unleavened. The reply is that the Pasover lamb is eaten ‘because God passed over the house of our fathers in Egypt’ (Ex. 12:26f); bitter herbs ‘because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt’ (cf. Ex. 1:14). Everyone must regard himself as if he had come out of Egypt (cf. Ex. 13:8).[\[90\]](#)

**3.** The singing of the first part of the Hallel (according to the school of Shammai, Ps. 113; according to the school of Hillel, Pss. 113 and 114).[\[92\]](#)

**4.** The drinking of a second cup of wine.[\[93\]](#)

**5.** The president takes unleavened bread, blesses God in the words, ‘Blessed art thou who bringest forth bread from the earth’, and breaks it in pieces which he hands to the guest.[\[94\]](#)

Jesus description of himself as the true Passover lamb.[\[91\]](#)

Paul refers to Christ as our Passover lamb: “Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.<sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth” (**1 Corinthians 5:7-8**).

**Luke 22:19** (NIV)

19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “**This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**”

**Matthew 26:26** (NIV)

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “**Take and eat; this is my body.**”

**Mark 14:22** (NIV)

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “**Take it; this is my body.**”

**1 Corinthians 11:23** (NIV)

	<p>23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,</p>
6. The meal proper. <a href="#">[95]</a>	<p><b>Luke 22:20</b> (NIV)</p> <p>20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, <b>“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.</b></p> <p><b>1 Corinthians 11:25</b> (NIV)</p> <p>25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, <b>“This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”</b></p>
8. The drinking of the fourth cup—the cup of Hallel. <a href="#">[97]</a>	
9. The singing of the second part of the Hallel. <a href="#">[98]</a>	<p><b>Matthew 26:30</b> (NIV)</p> <p>30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.</p> <p><b>Mark 14:26</b> (NIV)</p> <p>26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.</p>

In order to discover the importance or meaning of the Passover in the time of Christ as it relates to the Last Supper, it will be helpful to probe more deeply into this

feast. William Barclay's comments concerning the Passover are extremely helpful in understanding the Synoptic accounts as well as the Pauline writings. He makes the following comments:

It will help if we outline the Pasover ritual, so that we may see if the last meal fits into it. There were six things necessary for the Pasover and which had to be prepared in advance. . . . 1. There was the lamb. . . . 2. There was the unleavened bread. . . . 3. There was a bowl of salt water. . . . 4. There was a collection of bitter herbs, such as horseradish, chicory, endive, lettuce, horehound. . . . 5. There was a paste called *charosheth*. It was made of apples, dates, pomegranates, and nuts, and through it ran sticks of cinnamon. . . . 6. Lastly . . . there were four cups of wine.[\[99\]](#)

The above list is a condensed version of his elaborate detailed account of the Passover in the time of Christ. One perceives, at least from his account, that when Jesus instituted His Supper, there were four cups of wine used at the time of the Passover in the first century. When the Jews spoke of four cups of wine, they did not have reference to four literal containers, but rather to four formal drinkings in which each person filled their cups four different times. Each time the Twelve filled their cups, one also notices that each filling was referred to in the singular by a particular name. Once more, the explanation of the four cups by Barclay is instructive, especially for clarity as to the practice:

1. It began with the first cup, the cup of Kiddush, or the consecration. . . . The cup was accompanied with a prayer, thanking God for this memorial of redemption, and for taking Israel to himself as his own people.
2. The second cup is drunk. It is called the cup of the proclaiming, because it followed the proclaiming of the hand of God in Israel's history.
3. After the thanksgiving prayer, the third cup, which was called the cup of thanksgiving, was drunk, with this prayer.
4. The cup was filled for the fourth and last time. The second part of the Hallel, Psalms 115-118, was sung, and then the Great Hallel, Psalm 136.  
[\[100\]](#)

In the Pasover, in the time of Christ, it was necessary that the participants fill their cups with wine four different times during this meal. Ganzfried-Goldin affirms:

It is meritorious to acquire choice wine to perform the precept of drinking the four cups. . . . One should recline while drinking the wine. If possible, one should drink the entire contents of each of the four cups, in conformity with authorities. . . . The cups are then filled a second time, and a child asks. . . . He should cover the *matzah* (so that the *matzah* is not slighted when the cups of wine alone are being raised). All take the cups in their hands and say: . . . And each one takes his cup and holds it aloft until *Gaal yisrael* (Thou hast redeemed Israel) is conducted. All should then say the benediction *Bore peri haggafen*, and drink the second cup while reclining on the left side.[\[101\]](#)

### Singing Hymns

Singing Psalms is another innovation in the Passover in the time of Christ. Even

though the singing of Psalms was unscriptural, it was not antiscriptural. William Barclay (1907-1978), world-renowned Scottish New Testament interpreter and Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of Glasgow, clears away any underbrush that might keep one from identifying the Last Meal as a Passover feast: “The only thing in this reconstruction for which we need to go beyond the Synoptic Gospels is the information that the main meal did in fact intervene between the bread and the cup, as Paul tells us (1 Corinthians 11:25).”[\[102\]](#) Matthew writes: “When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (**Matthew 26:30**). Mark, too, says, “When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (**Mark 14:26**). Neither Luke nor Paul mentions the singing. The statement about the singing is in harmony with the Passover traditions in the time of Christ.

Barclay’s comments on the Hallel and bread breaking are enlightening:

6. For the Jew, one of the most sacred parts of scripture, a part to be memorized in youth and never forgotten, is the Hallel. Hallel means ‘Praise God’, and the Hallel consists of Psalms 113-118, which are praising psalms. At this point the first two psalms of the Hallel, Psalms 113 and 114, are sung.
7. At this point the second cup is drunk. It is called the cup of proclaiming, because it followed the proclaiming of the hand of God in Israel’s history.
8. At this point all who were to participate cleansed their hands. This is the normal ceremonial handwashing before a meal, for now the meal proper was to begin.
9. First, grace was said, and small pieces of the unleavened bread were distributed to the company. The Passover grace is:  
Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who bringest forth fruit from the earth.  
Blessed art thou who hast sanctified us with thy commandment, and enjoined us to eat unleavened cakes.[\[103\]](#)

## WINE IN THE PASSOVER

As one reads the history of the Pasover in the time of Christ, one detects that the cups were filled four different times, each filling was referred to as “the cup.” As noted above, Ganzfried-Goldin states that “The cups are then filled a second time.” The second filling of his or her cups was called The Cup of Proclamation, even though each person had his or her own cup. Thus, when the Disciples of Christ drank the third cup, it was called The Cup of Blessing, even though each one had his own individual cup. If someone had walked in during the religious festival and inquired as to the number of cups drunk so far, they would have answered according to the number of fillings. For example, if they were drinking The Cup of Blessing, they would have responded by saying, “We have drunk three cups,” not thirty-nine (3 x 13). Each filling was called by a specific name to signify the commemoration of certain events that had transpired in their lives, that is to say, the lives of the Jews.

Barton’s Candy Corporation published information, in the New York Times, about Jewish holidays in order for individuals to understand something about the traditions and customs of the Jewish Passover on how to conduct a Passover service:

A CUP OF WINE is placed at each table setting. The sanctification of the

Holiday is pronounced over the first cup. Three additional cups are drunk during the course of the Seder, making a total of four, to symbolize the four expressions of the Lord's promise to redeem the children of Israel and deliver them from bondage.[\[104\]](#)

Ronny Wade, one of the chief advocates for the one vessel, maintains that wine could not have possibly been used in the Pasover because of its fermentation.[\[105\]](#) He writes: "Since leavened wine is fermented wine, and since all leaven was to be put out of their houses, it logically follows that Jesus couldn't have used fermented wine without disobeying the law."[\[106\]](#) Wade asserts that Jesus would have violated the Law if He had used wine in the Passover. Since the Scriptures mention the "fruit of the vine" as a drink element in the Passover, one cannot help but wonder if Jesus violated the law? Did Jesus and His apostles violate the Law by reclining during the meal? Did Jesus violate the Law by singing the Psalms during the Passover? Did He violate the Passover by using wine during four formal drinkings?

Today, controversy still rages and divides God's people. The question that carves up God's community is: Did Jesus and His disciples drink wine or grape juice during the Passover? The Book of Exodus does not mention wine or grape juice in the original Passover. Gustaf Dalman highlights the point that wine was not used in the original Passover, but, at the same time, in the time of Christ, one observes that wine was employed in the Passover—the Synoptic Gospels all testify to this practice. Listen to Dalman as he describes the Passover:

In the East there is no meal without bread; but according to the Jewish conception no meal is complete without meat and wine. At the Passover meal it was the Paschal lamb, and under certain conditions also the so-called 'festive sacrifice', which supplied the former article of food; but wine, which the O. T. does not mention in connection with the Passover, was also essential. Psalm xxii. 5 already considers the 'full cup' as belonging to a proper meal. At the thank-offering meal the chalice was lifted up (Psalm cxvi.13). Every festive meal was in later times simply termed a 'drinking-bout, to which the verb 'to eat' was applied: 'he who "eats" the preliminary wedding celebration, "eats" also the drinking-bout (the wedding celebration, "eats" also the drinking-bout (the wedding banquet proper').[\[107\]](#)

The Jews did not consider wine a violation of the prohibition against leavened, which only pertained to the bread. The phrase "fruit of the vine" constituted a liturgical phrase for wine.[\[108\]](#) A. J. B. Higgins writes:

Wine was drunk at the Last Supper, and the drinking of wine was obligatory at the Pasover. That this was an old custom is evident from its being taken for granted in the Book of Jubilees (end of the second century B.C.), which contains the first mention of it (49:6,9). Wine was, of course, drunk on other festive occasions, but at the Passover the wine was *red*. That the wine at the Last Supper was red is proved by the comparison of it with blood by our Lord.[\[109\]](#)

Higgins again comments about the expression "fruit of the vine" (τοῦ γενήματος

τῆς ἀμπέλου, tou genhmatos ths ampelou):

Of particular significance are the Semitisms in Mark 14.25 (which is not repeated by Paul), especially τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου, wine being called ‘the fruit of the vine’ also in the Jewish benediction over wine.<sup>[110]</sup>

It is also significant that “wine” is called “Blood of grapes” in **Genesis 49:11**. Howard Marshall’s comments also verify the mandatory use of wine in the Passover:

The drinking of wine was not customary at ordinary meals, but was normal at festal meals and required at the Passover. Wine was also drunk at the ceremony of sanctifying the Sabbath. Hence the use of wine by Jesus is consistent with a Passover meal but not peculiar to this occasion. Jeremias further argues that Jesus used red wine to signify his blood. Red wine was a requirement at the Passover meal, although of course it was also served on other occasions.<sup>[111]</sup>

Within the one-cup movement, the argument against wine is a play on the liturgical phrase “fruit of the vine.” The objection to wine is that no vine ever produced wine, only grape juice. This argument fails to take into consideration that the phrase is a liturgical phrase for “wine.” The blessing over the cup is: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.<sup>[112]</sup> Wine is referred to as the “fruit of the vine” in this prayer. The prayer over the bread is as follows: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.<sup>[113]</sup> The bread is referred to as “bread from the earth.”

Did the earth produce bread or did it produce wheat from which bread is made? The Hebrew phrase is: זֶה אָתָּה מְאֹד (l#j#m m!n h\*a\*r#J, “bread from the earth”). The earth does not produce bread nor does the vine produce wine; nevertheless, one is called “bread from the earth” and the other is called “fruit of the vine.” In spite of the evidence, many still maintain that the use of wine is sinful. Surely, the early church must have used wine in the observance of the Lord’ Supper; otherwise, one wonders how they got drunk from grape juice. Listen to Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians:

<sup>17</sup> In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. <sup>18</sup> In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. <sup>19</sup> No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval. <sup>20</sup> When you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, <sup>21</sup> for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup> Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! (**1 Corinthians 11:17-20**)

Unless one comprehends the Passover in the first century, one cannot fully grasp the full significance of the Eucharistic sayings in the Synoptics and Pauline writings. If one understands that the third cup of the Pasover was called The Cup of Blessing or The

Cup of Redemption, this sheds some light on why Jesus instituted His Last Supper with the third formal drinking and not the first, second, or fourth. Ceil and Moishe Rosen explains:

The gospel accounts of the Last Supper mention only two of the four Seder cups—the first and the third. According to early Jewish tradition, these two were the most important. The first cup was special because it consecrates the entire Passover ritual that followed. But the Mishnah states that the third cup was the most significant of all. The third cup had two names: the “cup of blessing,” because it came after the blessing or grace after meals, and the “cup of redemption,” because it represented the blood of the Paschal lamb. It was of this cup that Jesus said “This is my blood of the new Testament [covenant]” (Matthew 26:28). It is this cup of blessing that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 10:16: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ.”<sup>[114]</sup>

As noted above, only Luke of the Synoptic Gospels mentions two of the four cups. Earlier, in this essay, I spoke of the second and third cup, not the first and third cup as mentioned by Ceil and Moshe Rosen. The scholars, as a whole, associate the first cup mentioned by Luke to be The Cup of Consecration, not The Cup of Proclamation. Nevertheless, it seems from the wording of Luke that the first cup declared by him is The Cup of Proclamation. Whether Luke points out the first or second, the point is, Luke calls attention to two of the four ritualistic cups. He is the only writer who lists two cups. On the other hand, Paul is the only one that gives the name. By observing the signification of the third cup (The Cup of Redemption), one can grasp why Jesus prefer this ritualistic cup to institute His memorial.

## LUKE 22:20

The King James renders the Greek text as if the participle modifies “blood” rather than “cup.” The KJV translators render this verse: “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”<sup>[115]</sup> If one applies the rule of English grammar to the participle, the participle (“which is shed”) modifies “blood,” which is its nearest noun.<sup>[116]</sup> The New International version also translates: “In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**” On the other hand, the New Revised Standard Version translates this verse according to Greek syntax: “And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “**This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.**”<sup>d [117]</sup> The New American Standard Version (Update: 1995) also translates this verse according to Greek grammar: “And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “**This cup which is <sup>a</sup>poured out for you is the <sup>b</sup>new covenant in My blood.**”<sup>[118]</sup>

Why did the translators of the Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Version connect the participle ἐκχυννόμενον (ekxunnomen, “being shed”) with ποτήριον (pothrion, “cup”) and not with αἷματι (Jaimati, “blood”)? In Greek grammar, the participle must modify its noun in the same case, same number, and same gender. The

word ποτήριον (pothrion, “cup”) is nominative case, singular number, and neuter gender. The participle ἔκχυννόμενον (ekxunnomen, “being shed”) is nominative case, singular number, and neuter gender. On the other hand, the word αἷματι (Jaimati, “blood,” dative case) fails to meet the requirements for the participle to modify “blood.”<sup>[119]</sup> The word “blood” is dative case, not nominative case. The word “blood” is neuter gender and singular number, but not the same case as the participle (“being shed”). Therefore the New American Standard Version and the New Revised Standard Version translated according to syntax. In this Greek sentence, the only word the participle can modify is “cup,” which is nominative, singular, and neuter—the same as the participle.

This understanding of Greek grammar reinforces the figurative use of the word *cup* in Luke as well as the other Synoptic writers. Scott McCormick, Jr, in dealing with the verb “is” (ἐστιν, estin), indirectly comments about Luke 22:20, which comment also is in harmony with the Greek text:

Further, the broken bread and outpoured wine could not have been at the Last Supper the actual substance of a completed sacrifice which at the moment was uncompleted. Equally telling is the fact that a substantive reading of estin is not possible in the wine saying as recorded by Paul and Luke: “This cup [which is poured out for you] is the new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor. 11:25; Luke 22:20). Clearly, neither the cup nor its contents could actually be the new covenant! And it would be mere exegetical subjectivism to assume that estin should get one interpretation at one point and yet another elsewhere in varying forms of the eucharistic words.<sup>[120]</sup>

This same concept is also found in Matthew and Mark. In both of those accounts one observes that the wine saying speaks of his blood as “poured out for many” (**Mark 14:24**). Whether one says “This cup which is poured out for you” or the other says, “This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many,” both authors are saying the same thing. The word *cup* is not literal but figurative. One can hardly read these two accounts without reflection upon the Suffering Servant prophecy in **Isaiah 53:12**: “Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,<sup>i</sup> and he will divide the spoils with the strong,<sup>k</sup> because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

## MATTHEW 26:27-29

Is Matthew contradicting **Luke 22:20**? The answer is no! Both accounts are in harmony. The word *cup* is used figuratively in Matthew as it is in Luke’s account. An analysis of these three verses in Matthew reveals that the word *cup* stands for wine, not a literal drinking vessel. Matthew strips away all extraneous matters and gives a synopsis of this event without detailing the surroundings in which Jesus instituted His Supper:

Then he took the cup (ποτήριον, pothrion), gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from (ἐκ, “of”) it (αὐτοῦ, autou), all of you. <sup>28</sup> This (τοῦτο, touto) is my blood (αἷμα, Jaima) of the<sup>b</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will not drink of (ἀπό, “from”) this fruit of (ἐκ) the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you

in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:27-29)

If one approaches this text with the idea that the word *cup* (ποτήριον, pothrion) is literal, then one automatically identifies the word *from* (ἐκ, ἐξ, "of," "from") as meaning "out of." The preposition ἐκ (ek) is employed twice in two verses—[27 and 29](#). In the first instance, the word ek is translated "out of," but, for some strange reason, the "common cup" fellowship does not translate the second occurrence of ek as "out of." Why not translate ek in [verse 29](#) as "out of" the fruit of the vine? Both Greek grammar and just a plain reading of the English text refute this forced reading by many Christians.

What does it mean to drink "of the fruit of the vine"? How should one interpret "of"? Well, this author, Dallas Burdette, suspects that one simply interprets this phrase to mean: drink the fruit of the vine. What does it mean to drink of the cup? If one can interpret the "of the fruit of the vine" correctly, one wonders why the other phrase poses such a problem. To drink the cup is to drink wine. Paul's comments to the Corinthians should clarify this obstacle, or enigma, in the eyes of many Christians: "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" ([1 Corinthians 11:26](#)).

As one seeks to understand this misunderstood text ([Matthew 26-27-29](#)), it is necessary to analyze the Greek text in order to shed more light on the correct interpretation. [Verse 28](#) begins with a demonstrative pronoun (τοῦτο, touto, "this") used as the subject of the sentence. The demonstrative pronouns ("this" [near] or "that" [far]) may be used with the force of a substantive. In [Matthew 26:28](#), the demonstrative pronoun (τοῦτο, touto, "this") is neuter, singular, and nominative case. Since it is neuter, one may translate "this blood." In this sentence, the word *blood* (αἷμα, Jaima) is predicate nominative, singular number, and neuter gender. The verb "to be" (ἐστιν, estin, "is") is followed by a predicate nominative ((αἷμα, Jaima), never a direct object. In other words, "blood" is not receiving the action of the verb. Rather, it is telling you something about the subject (τοῦτο, touto, "this").

To illustrate this principle still further, the following sentence is helpful: "It is I." In grammarians' terminology, the "I" is "predicating" something about the subject. Since the "I" is not receiving the action of the verb ("is"), the pronoun "I" cannot be a direct object, but rather a predicate nominative. To express the above text ([26:28](#)) another way, one can say that the copulative verb εἰμί (eimi, "is") equates what follows ("blood") with what precedes ("this"). Therefore, the complement following the verb requires a complement in the nominative case[\[121\]](#) to complete the ideas. The near demonstrative pronoun "this" equals "blood" and "blood" equals "this." The copulative verb "is" (the verb "to be"[\[122\]](#)) in [Matthew 26:28](#) links the subject ("this") and predicate ("blood")—"This (subject) is my blood (predicate)."

The antecedent of "this" (τοῦτο, touto) in [verse 28](#) is "cup" (ποτήριον) in [verse 27](#) and the antecedent of "it" (αὐτοῦ) in [verse 27](#) is "cup" (ποτήριον). The function of a personal pronoun in Greek is similar to its function in English. They are used to replace nouns and to avoid monotony. For example, the following Greek sentence illustrates the use of a pronoun and its antecedent: "I see the disciple and I am teaching him (βλέπω τὸν μαθητὴν καὶ διδάσκω ὑπὸν, blepw ton maqhthn kai didaskwn auton. The use of the pronoun (auton) is much better than repeating the subject maqhthn (disciple)—I see the

disciple (maqhthvn) and I am teaching the disciple (maqhthvn). In **Matthew 26:27**, the personal pronoun “it” (autou) is singular in number and neuter in gender, which agrees with its antecedent “cup” (pothvriion), which is also singular number and neuter in gender. On the other hand, the antecedent and its pronoun do not always agree in case—case depends upon its use in the sentence. The pronoun “it” is genitive case, but the noun “cup” is nominative.

Since the demonstrative pronoun “this” is equivalent to “blood” and has for its antecedent “cup,” one is conscious that the word “cup” is equivalent to the wine, which represents His blood. In **verse 27**, Jesus told them to drink the cup—“drink from it (autou), all of you.” What were they to drink? Both the pronoun “it” (v.27) and the “demonstrative pronoun “this” (v.28) have for their antecedent the word “cup.” The word “blood” also renames its subject “this.” Following this statement by Jesus, He says, “I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom” (26:29). The noun “cup” equals the pronoun “it” and the demonstrative pronoun “this” equals the noun “blood” and the noun “cup” and the pronoun “it” and the demonstrative pronoun “this,” and the predicate nominative “blood” all represent “this fruit of the vine.” Ray Summers writes: “The use of a word in context (syntax) is a better indicator of its meaning than a definition in a vocabulary list.”[\[123\]](#)

## CONCLUSION

This analysis of the Eucharistic sayings in the Synoptics and Pauline writings are not designed to impugn the motives of those who do not concur in the findings of this author. Just a perusal of the various journals among the one-cup and nonSunday school Christians, makes one conscious of their sincerity, but this writer cannot admit to their arguments to maintain disunity among the people of God. One’s sincerity is not a proof of one’s arguments. In this analysis of the disputed passages dealing with the Last Supper, there is repetition, which, to some extent, is unavoidable. Even in the arrangement of the subjects discussed in this chapter, this author has approached the subject in the most appropriate manner to accomplish his objectives with clarity.

There is subjectivity in the arrangement of the nine chapters in this series, but each chapter is designed to build upon another chapter as in a pyramid. This composition has sought to examine the arguments of the controversial passages advanced by the one-cup movement with respect. An authentic interpretation of the various authors of the New Testament dealing with the Last Supper must relate the facts as they really happened. Subjective interpretation of the various texts does not destroy the reality of the facts—the historical facts surrounding the Passover in the first century.

Many of the arguments advanced by the one-cup movement are ill founded, even though sincerely set forth. Several names are revealed in this chapter, but the mentioning of names is not designed to blacken the reputation of any of these godly men. As pointed out above, one cannot avoid believing that the authors (one cup and nonSunday school) referred to in this essay believe that truth is on their side. It is time that believers reexamine their traditions of orthodoxy. The following citation calls attention to the proper use of tradition in the lives of God’s people:

Like any growth, development may be healthy or it may be malignant; discerning the

difference between these two kinds of growth requires constant research into the pathology of traditions. But it is healthy development that keeps a tradition both out of the cancer ward and out of the fossil museum.[\[124\]](#)

It is in this same frame of mind that Sir Robert Anderson, in 1914, wrote a book defending the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this treatise, he lamented the rationalism of his day, especially the evangelicalism that gave way to the inroads of rationalism. His remarks against those who adopted so-called orthodoxy are as applicable today as it was then. Pay attention to Anderson as he goes right to the very heart of the problem: “Orthodoxy may thus be maintained by blindly obeying ‘the voice of the Church’; but orthodoxy is not faith, nor is the voice of the Church the Word of God.”[\[125\]](#) What is this Last Supper about? When the Eucharistic sayings are read in the assembly, one witnesses, as it were, to the mighty act of God in the redemption of humanity. Whether one uses one common cup or multiple cups, the result is the same—witness to the Gospel.

When Christians break up over the use of vessels to be employed in the communion, believers are building the City of Destruction instead of the City of God. The Gospel is not one cup and nonSunday school opinions, but rather, the Gospel is the Word of God coming from eternity into time. The Lord’s Supper is a picture of Christ’s sacrifice, a sacrifice represented throughout the New Testament as a cosmic necessity; in other words, Jesus is the Lord slain from the foundation of the world ([Ephesians 1:9](#)). This is what the Lord’s Supper depicts for the believer. Just a laid-back reading of the Eucharistic sayings reveals that the precious blood of Christ is the theme of the Christian community—forgiveness through His blood. In the Lord’s Supper, one discovers that the Cross of Christ is the supreme demonstration of the power and grandeur of God’s love for a lost and dying world.

In the eating and drinking of the bread and wine, God demonstrates externally to His people through visible signs His reign of Favor. In the observance of the Lord’s Supper, every Christian is consciously aware of the vicarious sufferings of the Lord Jesus and the burden of human guilt as He cried that cry of abandonment. One sees Him stagger, as it were, in the loneliness He experienced before He said, “It is finished” ([John 19:30](#)). The Last Supper is related to the redemptive meaning of His death. Christians should approach the Lord’s Table with a consciousness of participation in the body and blood of Christ. In many Christian communities today, one witnesses the mischief of factions with their battle slogans. Just as in Corinth, the divisions placed in question the celebration of the Lord’s Supper as it does in the twentieth-first century. This is why Paul writes with passion concerning their carnality:

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. <sup>15</sup> I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup> Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup> Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. <sup>18</sup> Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? <sup>19</sup> Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup> No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. <sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the

cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. <sup>22</sup> Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he? (**1 Corinthians 10:14-22**)

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<sup>[1]</sup> The word *Eucharistic* is used as an adjective to describe the Last Supper sayings. Terry L. Miethe, *Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal words* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1988), 85, defines the word *Eucharist* as follows:

**EUCHARIST.** From the Greek word *eucharistein*, “to give thanks.” The Eucharist is a service of thanksgiving for the believer’s redemption by Jesus’ death on the cross and His subsequent resurrection. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Eucharist is a sacrament (it gives grace) by which the person who partakes of the Eucharist is spiritually changed and united into the community of Jesus’ spirit and body: the Church. See: 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Luke 22:19. See: **Communion, Lord’s Supper, Sacrament.**

This author, Dallas Burdette, does not use the word *Eucharist* as sacramentalists, particularly the Catholics. R. T. Beckwith, Warden of Latimer House, Oxford, s.v. “Eucharist” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, editors, Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 236, writes:

**Eucharist** (Gr., meaning ‘thanksgiving’) is an early patristic name (found in the Didache, Ignatius, etc.) for the Lord’s Supper or Holy communion. It is derived from the thanksgivings or graces which, from the Last Supper onwards, have been part of the sacramental action.

<sup>[2]</sup> Since this essay cites sources from the one-cup and non Sunday school segment of the so-called Restoration Movement, it is appropriate to cite three sources from their own writings to give weight to the contention that the Last Supper occurred during the Passover. For example, the first is from the late E. H. Miller (1-25-1909—12-29-1989),

who wrote: “The words, ‘and they were eating . . .’ refer to the eating of the Passover meal which immediately preceded the institution of the Lord’s Supper,” in E. H. Miller, *Proof Cups and Classes Are Not Scriptural* (La Grange, GA: E. H. Miller, nd—approximately 1956), 22. Miller also calls attention to “four cups of the fruit of the vine” in the Passover (*Ibid.*). Second, James Orten and Alton Bailey, too, admits that the Last Supper occurred during the Passover: “The phrase ‘as they were eating’ referred to the fact that the institution took place while they were eating the Jewish Passover Supper” in James D. Orten and Alton B. Bailey, *Sanitation in Communion*, second edition (LaGrange, GA: The Informer Publication, 1993), 12. And, finally, See also Ronny F. Wade, *Thoughts On The Communion* (Harrodsburg, Indians: Robert Strain, 1963), 7, who also admits they were eating the Passover at the time of the Last Supper.

<sup>[3]</sup> See William Barclay, *The Lord’s Supper* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), 16-34 for a detailed study of the Passover traditions in the time of Christ.

<sup>[4]</sup> If one wishes to read the Greek and Hebrew characters, one must order the Greek and Hebrew fonts from Galaxie Software. Click on Greek and Hebrew to the left of the menu.

<sup>[5]</sup> Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus—Jeshua: Studies in the Gospels* (England: SPCK, 1925; reprint, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004). 161 (page reference is to the reprint edition).

<sup>[6]</sup> E. H. Miller and M. L. Lemley, *THE CUP OF THE LORD: WHAT IS IT?: A Friendly Discussion Between E. H. Miller and M. L. Lemley* (LaGrange, GA: E. H. Miller, nd, 1956/1957—approximate date), 13. These comments of E. H. Miller will be discussed in detail later in this paper.

<sup>[7]</sup> Ernest F. Kevan, *The Lord’s Supper* (Great Britain: Burlington Press, 1966, 1973), 27.

<sup>[8]</sup> Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus—Jeshua*, 153-154.

<sup>[9]</sup> For examples of this mindset (The word *cup* means a drinking vessel), one should consult one of their major publications—*Old Paths Advocate*, published by Don L. King (publisher) and Ronny F. Wade (assistant publisher), 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550. See also E. H. Miller and M. L. Lemley, *THE CUP OF THE LORD: WHAT IS IT?: A Friendly Discussion Between E. H. Miller and M. L. Lemley* (LaGrange, GA: E. H. Miller, nd, 1957—approximate date), 12-30 and 41-54. Also, Ronny F. Wade, *Thoughts on the Communion*, *Ibid.*, 12-16. See also E. H. Miller, *Proof: Cups and Classes Are Not Scriptural* (E. H. Miller: LaGrange, GA, nd), 29. Unfortunately, Christianity has been degraded into a system of petty exactions with senseless and intolerant dogmatism toward those who do not concur with their particular brand of orthodoxy. Today, many believers are moving away from an attitude of intolerance to a spirit of love, in spite of differences. The Gospel needs to be rescued from the mindset that identifies the Gospel with one’s beliefs about a so-called worship service with its five rituals.

<sup>[10]</sup> See Ronald David Witherup, “The Cross of Jesus: A Literary-Critical Study of

Matthew 27,” (Ph. D dissertation, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1985), 95, where he comments on an important methodology of literary criticism.

Contemporary literary criticism accepts the object of its study as literature in and of itself, not as a means to an end. As opposed to the other Biblical criticism, there is no intention to look behind the text to discern history or sources. Literary criticism looks at a text, rather than through it. To use Murray Krieger’s apt metaphor, the text is to be viewed not as a “window” through which one looks to discern what is on the other side; rather, it is a “mirror” and the meaning of the text is thus on “this side” of the reading experience.

This author, Dallas Burdette, has witnessed this looseness in the writings of those who advance a wooden literalness of the Eucharistic sayings in the Synoptics and Pauline writings. Many believers do not make a distinction between the *implied reader* and the *real reader*. The *implied reader* understood the information that the authors of the New Testament did not elaborate on. On the other hand, the *real reader*, which is us, have to go to outside sources in order to fill in what the *implied reader* already knew. For example, one should consult the history of the traditions surrounding the Passover in the first century in order to discover what the implied reader already knew by his or own culture.

<sup>[11]</sup> John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1987), 75.

<sup>[12]</sup> Mark Allen Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 1-10.

<sup>[13]</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>[14]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[15]</sup> See M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993), 269, where he says,

Iser distinguishes between the “implied reader,” who is established by the text itself as one who will respond in specific ways to the “response-inviting structures” of the text, and the “actual reader,” whose responses are inevitably colored by his or her accumulated private experiences.

<sup>[16]</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 149-150; Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974; David Robert Bauer, “*The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel: A Literary-Critical Examination*,” (Ph. D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1985), 24-26; Dorothy Jean Weaver, “*The Missionary Discourse in the Gospel of Matthew: A Literary Critical Analysis*,” (Ph. D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1987), 66.

<sup>[17]</sup> See W. K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Kentucky: The University press of Kentucky, 1982), 268, where he counsels Christians not to reject literary criticism.

Religious thinkers should be sympathetic to criticism because it is a branch of philosophy; it is an effort to get at certain truths about signs, knowledge, and reality. If these remarks seem at all platitudinous, let me add that I have taken the trouble to make them because it seems to me possible for the thought and scholarship of religious person (especially in America today) to be too far sold in the cultivation of certain merely historical informational, and neutral techniques. This may have been for a time a necessary phase of competition with secular science and secular education. But there is no reason why Christians should be the last (or even be slow) to transcend the limitations of such knowledge, to outgrow pedantic misconceptions and participate in literary philosophy.

[18] See A. B. J. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1952, 1964), 17, where he states: “The chief authorities for the identification of the Last Supper as a Passover meal are: G. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeshua*, Engl. Tr., 1929, pp. 86-132; Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., ii, 1924, pp. 812 ff; iv, 1928, pp. 41 ff; and Jerias, op.cit., pp. 10-49, to the last of which in particular I am greatly indebted in what follows.”

[19] See Higgins, *Ibid.*, where he speaks of the probability of the common cup in the time of Christ: “3. Another objection is that our accounts speak of a common cup, whereas, it is alleged, at the Passover, individual cups were used. But the probabilities are in favor of the use of the common cup in the time of Jesus.” He maintained the Passover tradition, but, at the same time, he could not reconcile the language of the Synoptics with the use of individual cups in the Passover. He, like so many other scholars failed to interpret the Gospel accounts in light of the traditions practiced in the time of Christ.

[20] G. H. Box, “The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 3 (1902): 359.

[21] Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 68. Ronny F. Wade, preacher and writer of the one-cup and nonSunday School movement within the Churches of Christ, stresses that “individual cups” did not exist until the end of the nineteenth century, which was invented by the Rev. J. G. Thomas, a minister and physician, in Ronny F. Wade, *This Do In Remembrance Of Me: Thoughts on the communion* (Robert Strain: Harrodsburg, 1963), 22-23. It is true that Dr. J. G. Thomas did receive a patent on the small individual cups in 1894, but he did not invent the use of individual cups. Individual cups were used in the Passover, not just the nineteenth century.

[22] G. H. Box, “The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist,” *Ibid.*, 360.

[23] F. Gavin, *Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments*, (Kila, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 1928), vii.

[24] Daniel B. Wallace addresses the credibility of *Thayer Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament in Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 25:

Deissmann demonstrated that the vast bulk of NT vocabulary was to be found in the papyri. The

pragmatic effect of Deissmann's work was to render obsolete virtually all lexica and lexical commentaries written before the turn of the century. (Thayer's lexicon, published in 1886, was consequently outdated shortly after it came off the press—yet, curiously, it is still relied on today by many NT students).

[\[25\]](#) Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek—English Lexicon of the New Testament* (T & T. Clark, 1901; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), XII (page references are to reprint edition).

[\[26\]](#) David Allen Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1993), 22.

[\[27\]](#) L. Berkhof, *Principles of biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 114.

[\[28\]](#) Ibid., 115.

[\[29\]](#) Elgin Moyer, revised and enlarged by Earle E. Cairns, "Laud, William," in *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), 236, writes:

In 1633 made Archbishop of Canterbury and began work as head of the church with great zeal and determination. In 1637 attempted to force ritualism on the Scottish Presbyterian church. This led to rebellion in the entire Scottish nation. When the king endeavored to squelch the rebellion, trouble broke out at home, and the Civil War of 1642-1649 followed. Laud's severe program against the Puritans led to migration of 400,000 of them to New England and the Caribbean. In 1640 impeached for treason, placed in confinement, and sent to the Tower in 1641. Tried later, and in 1645 with great firmness he met his death on the scaffold at the Tower. A High churchman and early exponent of what later came to be known as the Anglo-Catholic school.

[\[30\]](#) Harmon B. Niver, *A School History of England* (New York: American Book Company, 1904), 219.

[\[31\]](#) Ibid., 221.

[\[32\]](#) Emil Brunner, "The Meaning of the Last Supper," in *The Great Invitation and other Sermons* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), 119.

[\[33\]](#) A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, 17.

b Some manuscripts *the new*

a Some manuscripts *the new*

[\[34\]](#) Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *The theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), Vol. 6, 148.

[\[35\]](#) Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, William b. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982, 1993)141-142.

[\[36\]](#) Ibid., 142.

[\[37\]](#) Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *The theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), Vol. 6, 154.

[\[38\]](#) Ibid., 155.

[\[39\]](#) Ibid.

[\[40\]](#) William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper*, 45.

[\[41\]](#) J. Gresham Machen, *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (United States: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 25.

[\[42\]](#) Miller, *Proof: Cups and Classes Are Not Scriptural*, 29.

[\[43\]](#) William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper*, 45-46.

[\[44\]](#) Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *The theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), Vol. 2, 133. The emphasis (underlining) is mine—RDB.

[\[45\]](#) A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1952, 1964), 30.

[\[46\]](#) Ibid.

[\[47\]](#) Scott McCormick, Jr., *The Lord's Supper: A Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 55.

[\[48\]](#) I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 43.

[\[49\]](#) William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper* (1967), 61. It is significant that Barclay understands the word *cup* as equivalent to “blood.”

[\[50\]](#) Ibid., 37.

[\[51\]](#) See Ronny Wade, “Religious Controversy,” *Old Paths Advocate*, Vol., LXXIX, no. 7 (July 2005): 8, writes about Miller’s defense of the one-cup and nonSunday schools position: “Another preacher who distinguished himself in debate was E. H. Miller of LaGrange, GA. During the fifties and sixties he traveled widely both preaching and debating.”

[\[52\]](#) Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 175.

[\[53\]](#) I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 806.

[\[54\]](#) Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text With Introduction, Notes, and Indexes* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1952, 1966), 545.

[\[55\]](#) Ibid., 546.

[\[56\]](#) Ibid.

[\[57\]](#) Ibid.

[\[58\]](#) Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *The theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), Vol. 6, 155.

[\[59\]](#) See Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to Mark* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1974), 545. Taylor himself believes that the Eucharist occurred during the Passover.

[\[60\]](#) Ibid.

[\[61\]](#) Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966), 68.

[\[62\]](#) Taylor, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 545.

[\[63\]](#) Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 69-70.

[\[64\]](#) Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus—Jeshua: Studies in the Gospel*, 108.

[\[65\]](#) Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord’s Supper*, 19 (emphasis mine—RDB).

[\[66\]](#) Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 68-69.

[\[67\]](#) W. F. Slater, *St. Matthew*, The New Century bible, 1925), revised by G. H. Box , New and Enlarged Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 338.

[\[68\]](#) William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper*, 23 (emphasis mine—RDB).

[\[69\]](#) Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper*, 19 (emphasis mine—RDB).

[\[70\]](#) W. F. Slater and revised by G. H. Box, *St. Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. C. & E. C. Jack, TTD, 1925), 338.

[\[71\]](#) See Chapter 9 in this series for an in-depth study as to the meaning of the Lord's Supper—“The Significance of the Last Supper: Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ.

[\[72\]](#) Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, 17.

[\[73\]](#) W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 249.

[\[74\]](#) D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), s.v. “Redaction Criticism: on the Legitimacy and Illegitimacy of a Literary Tool,” by D. A. Carson, 136.

[\[75\]](#) See Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: John Know, 1981), s. v. “Mishna,” 123, for a listing of the Tractates of the Mishnah. Also, consult Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), Vol. 1, s.v. “Abbreviations,” 39.

[\[76\]](#) See F. B. Huey Jr. and Bruce Corley, *A Student's Dictionary for Biblical & Theological Studies: A Handbook of Special and Technical Terms* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1983), 127, where they write:

**MISHNAH.** A codification of the traditional oral law of the Tannaim as distinct from the written Torah of the Pentateuch. Committed to writing ca A.D. 200 by Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi (The Prince): it is the basic halakic document of Judaism, containing sixty-three tractates organized into six major divisions. Talmud.

[\[77\]](#) Ibid., 184, where Huey and Corley comment:

**TALMUD.** The name given to the combination of the Mishnah and the Gemara: the compilations of rabbinic teaching and interpretation made by the Amoraim during the third through sixth centuries A.D. In the academies of Babylonia and Palestine. These compilations are called the Babylonian Talmud, comprising some two and one-half million words, and the Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud, a shorter version.

[\[78\]](#) See Dallas Burdette, ‘False Prophets in the gospel of Matthew, Who Are They?’ (Doctor of Ministry Dissertation, Erskine Theological Seminary in Due West, South Carolina, 1999), 48-63, for a detailed study of the oral and codified traditions of the Jews.

[\[79\]](#) Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 69-70.

[\[80\]](#) See A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord’s Supper in the New Testament*, 17.

[\[81\]](#) Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 70.

[\[82\]](#) Ibid., 70.

[\[83\]](#) F. B. Huey, Jr. & Bruce Corley, *A Student’s Dictionary for Biblical & Theological Studies*, 190, write:

**TORAH.** The word properly means “instruction.” The name of the first division of the Hebrew Bible composed of the first five books: it is also called the Law. Neviim. Ketubim.

[\[84\]](#) Ceil and Moshe Rosen, *Christ in the Passover, Why Is This Night Different?* (Chicago: Moody, 1978), 51.

[\[85\]](#) James Orr, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), Vol., 4, s.v. “Passover,” by Nathan Isaacs, 2258

[\[86\]](#) Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 48.

[\[87\]](#) Ibid., 49.

[\[88\]](#) Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus—Jeshua: Studies in the Gospels*, 108.

[\[89\]](#) A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord’s Supper in the New Testament*, 45

[\[90\]](#) Ibid., 46

[\[91\]](#) Ibid.

[\[92\]](#) Ibid.

[\[93\]](#) Ibid.

[\[94\]](#) Ibid

[\[95\]](#) Ibid.

[\[96\]](#) Ibid.

[\[97\]](#) Harold A. Sevener, ed., *Passover Haggadah for Biblical Jews and Christians* (New York: Beth Sar Shalom—The House of the Prince of Peace, nd), 41-42.

[\[98\]](#) A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, 47.

[\[99\]](#) William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), 22-21

[\[100\]](#) Ibid., 22-24.

[\[101\]](#) Ganzfried-Golden, *Code of Jewish Law* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1963), 3: 45, 48-49.

[\[102\]](#) William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), 25. For a detained analysis of the Passover meal, see Barclay, Ibid., 16-34.

[\[103\]](#) Ibid., 23.

[\[104\]](#) Copies of the *Traditional Way to Make a Seder* may be ordered from Barton's Candy Corporation, 80 DeKalb Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. 11201. Also, another insightful book on the Pasover is found in Harold A. Sevener, ed., *Passover Haggadah: for Biblical Jews and Christians* (Orangebur, NY: Beth Sar Shalom: The House of the Prince of Peace, nd).

[\[105\]](#) See Ronny F. Wade, *Thoughts on the Communion* (Harrodsburg, Indiana: Robert Stein, 1863), 20.

[\[106\]](#) Ibid.

[\[107\]](#) Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus—Jeshua: Studies in the Gospels*, 147.

[\[108\]](#) Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 162.

[\[109\]](#) A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, 21.

[\[110\]](#) Ibid., 24.

[\[111\]](#) I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper*, 60.

[\[112\]](#) *Messianic Passover Haggadah* (Charlotte, NC: Chosen People Ministries, Inc, nd), 30.

[\[113\]](#) Ibid., 31.

[\[114\]](#) Ceil and Moshe Rosen, *Christ in the Passover: Why Is This Night Different?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 59. The underlining is mine (RDB).

[\[115\]](#) *King James Version.*, Lk 22:20. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995.

[\[116\]](#) For a detailed study of the English and Greek grammar dealing with participles, see Chapter 6 in this study—“Passover Traditions in the First Century.”

d Other ancient authorities lack, in whole or in part, verses 19b-20 (*which is given . . . in my blood*)

[\[117\]](#) *New Revised Standard Version*, Lk 22:20. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996, c1989.

a Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24

b Ex 24:8; Jer 31:31; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8, 13; 9:15

[\[118\]](#) *New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update*, Lk 22:20. LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995.

[\[119\]](#) See William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 233, where he writes:

- A participle is an “-ing” word like “eating,” “sleeping,” “procrastinating”
- A participle is a verbal adjective, sharing characteristics of both a verb and an adjective;
- As a verb, a participle has tense (present, aorist, perfect) and voice (active, middle, passive);
- As an adjective, a participle agrees with the noun it modifies in case, number, and gender.

[\[120\]](#) Scott McCormick, Jr., *The Lord’s Supper: A Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 26.

j Or *many*

k Or *numerous*

b Some manuscripts *the new*

[\[121\]](#) The nominative case is the case of designation. It is the “naming” case. Its main use is that of the subject of the sentence or clause.

[\[122\]](#) This verb does not have voice since it shows state of being, not action. The grammar books call this verb a “copula,” that is to say, copula means to link or connect. It usually states no action or state of its own like other verbs. In other words, it serves merely to connect a subject and a predicate. Another item about εἰμί is that it always has the same case after it that precedes it. It never takes a direct object. If the subject that proceeds is nominative case, then the predicate after it is nominative. The verb εἰμί has no power over cases at all. It only links. The verb εἰμί requires a complement rather than an object to complete its meaning. Since it never takes a direct object, the accusative will not be used. The verb “to be” in Greek, as in English, takes a predicate nominative or adjective. It is not always necessary to include a form of the verb “to be” in a Greek sentence; the verb may simply be understood from the context. The predicate nominative may be placed first for emphasis. A simple rule for determining the subject will be this: The subject usually has the article.

[\[123\]](#) Ray Summers, Revised by Thomas Sawyer, *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman, 1995), 29.

[\[124\]](#) Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 60.

[\[125\]](#) Sir Robert Anderson, *The Lord From Heaven: A Study of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Pickering & Inglis, 1914), 88.